Week ending April 5 1958 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

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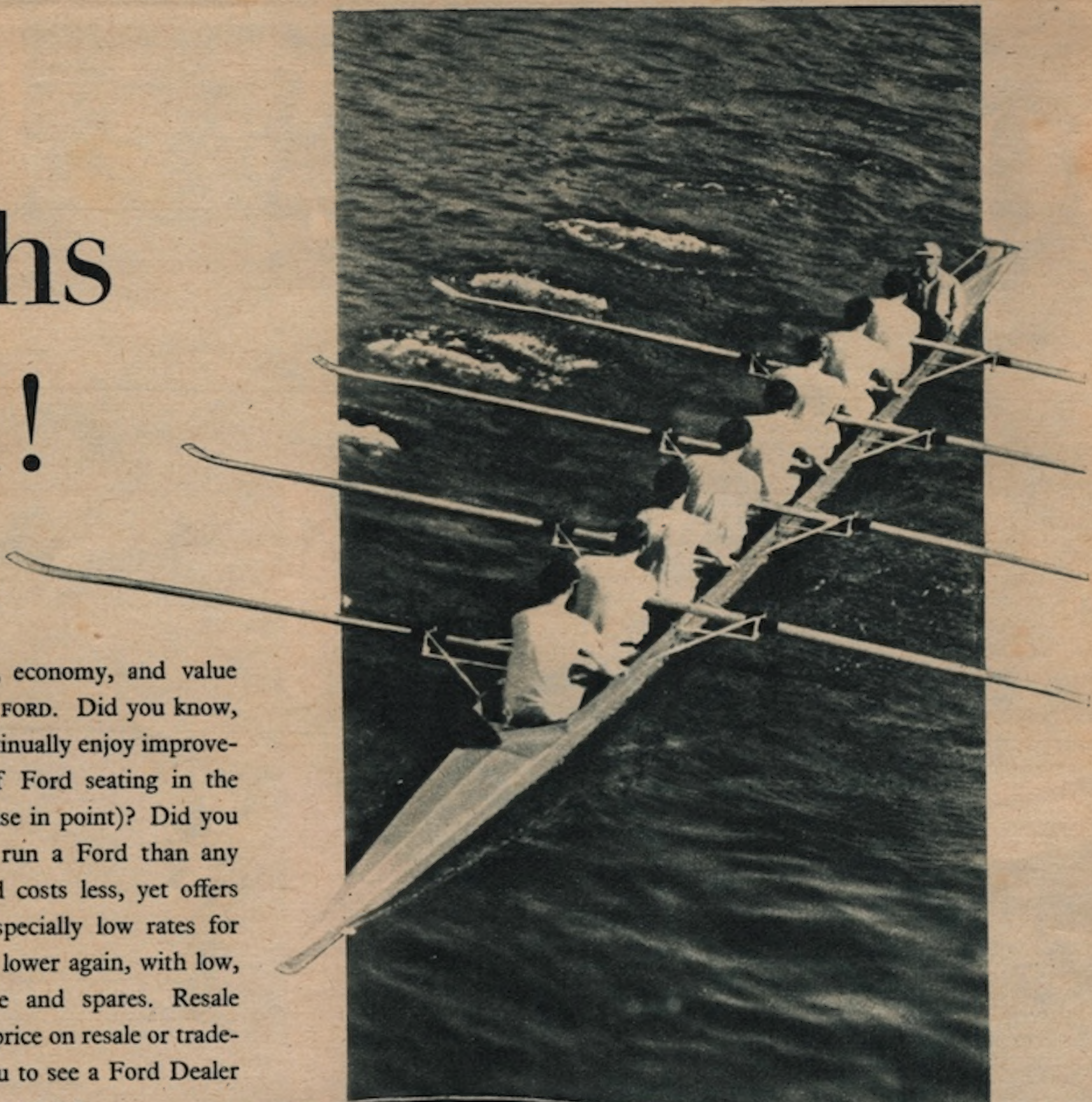

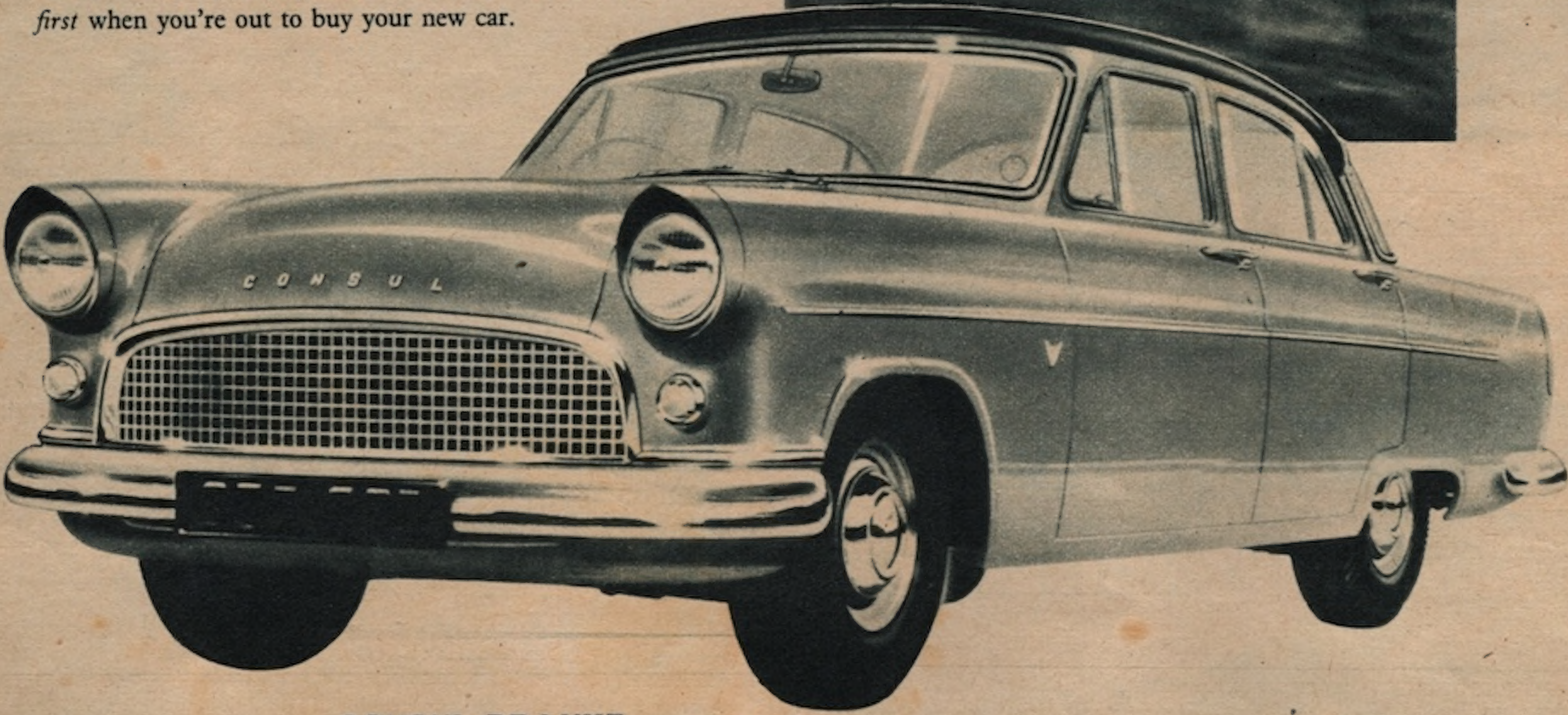

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IN THIS ISSUE

Stories

TOTEM SACRIFICE *by Alastair Scobie* 9
SPLENDID FREEDOM *by Dudley Hoys* 14
AFTERNOON OF TERROR *by Frank Bennett* 31

Articles

FIFTY MILLION GOLDEN EGGS *by Jerome Hood* 7
DOES THE DOCTOR WASTE YOUR MONEY? *by Dr. Brian Anson* 13
TAKE YOUR SEATS FOR TRALEE · STEEPLE BUMPSTEAD · SMOLENSK *by Alan Lloyd* 16
FOOTBALL'S PRINCE OF BLARNEY *by John Ballantine* 20

Serials

THE CAVES OF NIGHT (Part 2) *by John Christopher* 18
ERIKA AND THE KING OF NEPAL (Part 3) *by Erika Leuchtag* 25

Features

FREE SPEECH: 4. THE COVER: 4. IN SHORT: 12. SPRING: 16. JOKES: 22, 26, 29, 34. AUTHORSHIP: 23, 29, 33, 34. A PROBLEM FOR PERCY THROWER: 24. CHALLENGE THE FAMOUS: 27. APRIL: 28.

Ⓒ *Odhams Press Ltd., 1958*

REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Alastair Scobie: Africa's the place to see dancing

When he was living in Southern Rhodesia Alastair Scobie, author of our story *Totem Sacrifice*, which begins on page 9, was visited by the police and charged. "I was remanded for seven days, but I wanted some peace for writing so I asked if I could spend the time in jail," Scobie says. "My request was granted—although the charges were later dropped."

Prison was just another one of many experiences for Scobie, who now lives in Cape Town. He has worked in a textile mill, as a lecturer in international affairs, and in most jobs in the film business, including editor, scriptwriter, director, producer, cameraman—"and even the chap who gets the tea in the afternoons." He has also travelled in most of Africa, been on many safaris and lived in Tanganyika and Kenya.

Scobie says that he has two ambitions: to write a successful play and to photograph a gorilla in its natural surroundings. "For me both of these are almost impossibly difficult and equally unlikely—but I'll be satisfied with either."

The author of several books, Scobie is also a gourmet and a balletomane—"but Africa spoils the Western ballet for you," he says. "No dancer, male or female, on any West End stage can equal the perfection of a Watusi prince dancing his traditional lion-dance; no music is more stirring than the drum beating and chanting that accompanies even the tamest African witch-dance."

On Christmas morning the postman knocked at Richard Murdoch's home in Surrey with an unusual present from his mother—a "family" fruit tree capable of bearing five kinds of apple. "There are five in our family, so I was delighted," says Murdoch. "But I was puzzled: how on earth should I prune it?"

Murdoch, for twenty years an outstanding radio and television personality, put his poser to TV gardening expert Percy Thrower. He gets the answer in our new gardening feature, which appears this week on page 24.

Thrower and Murdoch first met in a television sketch last year, the only time that Thrower has played the comic. "I bombarded Percy with my gardening problems," says Murdoch. "And with a garden extending over more than an acre there are plenty."

Murdoch, fifty-one on Sunday, takes gardening the easy way with a motor mower and electric hedge clippers, but cannot quell his instinct for comedy. Once, when amusing his children—Belinda, now sixteen, Jane, fifteen, and Timothy, twelve—he let the mower chug across the lawn uncontrolled while he struggled on his back. The last laugh was accidental. As he set off to catch the mower Murdoch tripped and it crashed down a twelve-foot bank.

Two gardening problems Percy Thrower cannot solve. How to curb the Murdoch's pony—and Richard's appetite for golf. "The only answer to the last one," says Murdoch, "is to move. The golf course is over the garden fence."

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Free Speech

- **The wrong people earn most money**
- **Why do telephones distort the voice?**
- **How to make holidays happier**

WHAT a mixed-up sense of values we have in this country!

We pay the dentist who looks after our children's teeth three times as much as the teacher who looks after their minds.

We pay the barrister who prosecutes a criminal far more than we pay the detective who catches him.

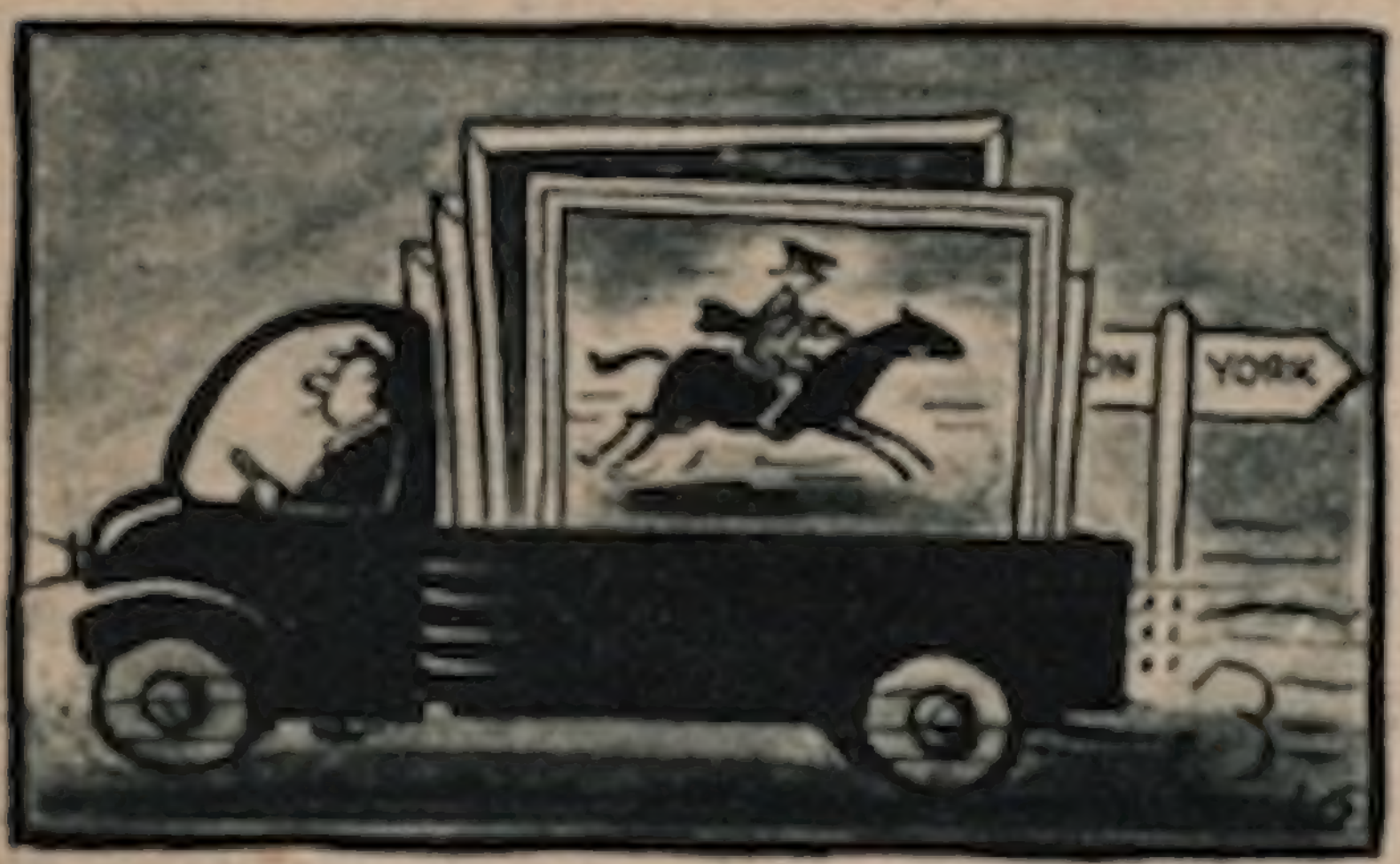
And a nuclear scientist, a neighbour of mine, can barely make ends meet, while another neighbour, who manufactures face powder, lives luxuriously.

There seems to be something wrong somewhere. — J. C. B., Reading, Berkshire.

Good Thing Too!

As a smug and conceited southerner I believe that P. Thompson of Leeds ("Free Speech," March 8) has a turnip-sized chip on his shoulder.

I suggest a visit to London's art galleries, which he suggests the north is being pillaged to fill, to see how many dialects are spoken by visitors and then calculate the percentage of Londoners among the people gloating over the ill-gotten treasures.



London is, with no disrespect to any northern city, Britain's number one showplace. The world comes to London, and there is no place like it. It belongs to every Englishman, smug, conceited southerners and blockheads included.—C. W. Delo, Star House, Whitstable, Kent.

New Drill

Ultrasonic methods have been employed for drilling glass and other glass-hard substances. There is negligible temperature rise with this process.

Yet the dentist still employs the old type of twist drill and spends much of his time waiting for the temperature generated to disperse.

I have discussed this with a dentist friend who agreed that such a method should make the patient more comfortable, but that there is no such equipment available to him.—E. O. Banfill, Rowledge, Farnham, Surrey.

"This type of drill has been experimented with for several years," says the British Dental Association. "It has a number of snags—for example, you can't drill round corners with it. It is not yet on the market."

Low-Fi Phones

Speaking to a friend on the telephone, I was impressed by the exaggeration of her accent. Her normal, scarcely detectable Scottish accent became so strong that it might have come straight from the Gorbals.

Is there a simple explanation of this? Are accents really enhanced, or is the effect of the telephone to suppress some part of the sound, so that the individuality of voice and accent is apparently increased?—R. Robinson, Henry Road, Aylesbury, Bucks.

"When you speak into a telephone or microphone," says a sound engineer, "you are speaking at a range of two or three inches and all the sound of the voice is channelled into the instrument, emphasizing speech characteristics. Speaking to someone across a room, you speak from a range of several feet and the characteristics tend to be diminished."

Curly Hair

My brother's hair was straight and very fine when he was a schoolboy, and when he was just past eighteen it began to wave and grow springy. This continued until now, at forty-eight, his hair is a mass of tight waves and curls, completely different from the hair with which he was born.

He has a son, also just past eighteen, whose hair has been straight from birth, but is now waving in exactly the same way as his father's. Why is this? — Mrs. V. Latham, Queen's Road, Wimbledon, S.W.19.

. . . I notice that all Chinese and Japanese people have jet black and straight hair, with never a curl to be seen. Negroes, on the other hand, invariably have curly hair. What is the reason? — Mrs. Frances Cruickshank, Straghan, Kincardineshire.

"Straight hair is produced by the perfect hair follicle," says a hair specialist. "Curly hair is produced by a distorted follicle. The straight hair of the occidentals and the crinkly hair of the Negro are racial characteristics and impossible to explain."

THE COVER

A RAY of sunshine, a little drifting blossom, some buds and birds and bees—and the adult world seems to go mad. *His* dreamboat, *her* sweetie-pie, indeed! Yet for Mother all this is just a pageant of passed years. And perhaps only she can see, a few years hence, her gawky gigglers covered with April blossom, snuggled on a park seat and bringing home shy swains for Sunday tea. Then there will be reality about those letters on a first-form bench, *A.B. loves C.D.*; sweet nothings will become sweet somethings — and Coleman's cover joke will be over.

Doggy Instincts

Reading your article on heredity ("Will Baby Be Like You?" John Bull, March 1) I was reminded of a beautiful collie bitch I once owned. I bought her from an acquaintance when she was six weeks old. I live in the centre of the town, so she had never run the fields. But she would round up anything.

If we threw a ball for our other dog, Meg would dash in front and head him off, showing not the least interest in the ball. She would also drive the chickens into a corner, then shepherd them to another. She would even run and head off the children if they walked ahead of us.

Had she inherited that characteristic from her forebears, some of whom were champion sheep-dogs?—D. A. Gourdon, Portland Road, Worthing.

"Sheep-dogs have to be trained," says an expert on animal heredity. "Breeding may produce a dog which is more readily trainable, but in this case I think the explanation is that the dog enjoyed that particular activity, not that it inherited any instinct for herding from its ancestors."

Mr. Ben Greene

In your issue of 1st March, 1958, on page 30, Mr. Don Everitt states: "References to Miss Greene's father Ben Greene who was a wartime internee regularly cause the League embarrassment and annoyance."

Any statement without qualification that I, a British subject, was a war internee, represents an innuendo of lack of patriotism, if not of actual treachery, which is an outright libel on my good name.

The facts of my twenty months' detention from May, 1940, to January, 1942, if not well known to you are a matter of public record, and can be easily ascertained.

I was held in prison under a wartime regulation without trial, and without any means of establishing my innocence. My application for a writ of Habeas Corpus, which is now part of the legal and constitutional history of our times, revealed such confusion in the facts of my case, that a further inquiry was ordered. It was there established that the only evidence against me was based on the unsworn statement of an alien, who on examination admitted that his statement was false. I was released and all accusations against me were withdrawn, except that my mother was of German birth, and my sister was married to a German, who is now the West German Ambassador to the Vatican.

Since the war I have had to live under the shadow of this experience. Any malicious tongues can speak of it behind my back. Statements appearing in the press, it is true, are apologized for. Mr. Everitt I have reason to believe was fully aware of one such case, and yet he deliberately repeats the unqualified statement with its innuendo. There is, therefore, no case here for an apology to avoid the legal consequences.

I am quite determined that I shall clear my name once and for all of these foul insinuations. The best remedy open to me is a public case in a court of law. I am, however, ready to give instructions to my solicitor not to proceed with an action for libel if you will publish this letter exactly as it is now written in full in your next issue.

If your sense of justice inclines you to add an apology, I should of course accept it. — Ben Greene, Kepston Limited, Greene Field Road, Berkhamstead, Herts.

We regret having printed a statement which Mr. Greene feels is a reflection on him. We certainly did not intend that, and offer him our apologies.

Tranquillizer

I have been bitten so badly by the bed-reading bug in recent months that I have to set my alarm clock, not for waking me in the morning, but to warn me when it is time to put out the light and go to sleep.—Harry A. T. Double, Elsenham Road, Manor Park, London, E.12.

Courtesy Coupons

Relatives visiting the West German seaside resort of Laboe last year were introduced to a novel way of ensuring courtesy and service.

On their arrival in the town they were presented with a number of courtesy coupons and asked to give them to anyone in the resort rendering particularly good service. At the end of the year the people holding the largest number of coupons received special prizes.

British resorts could well copy.—Mrs. M. Sowersby, West Street, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

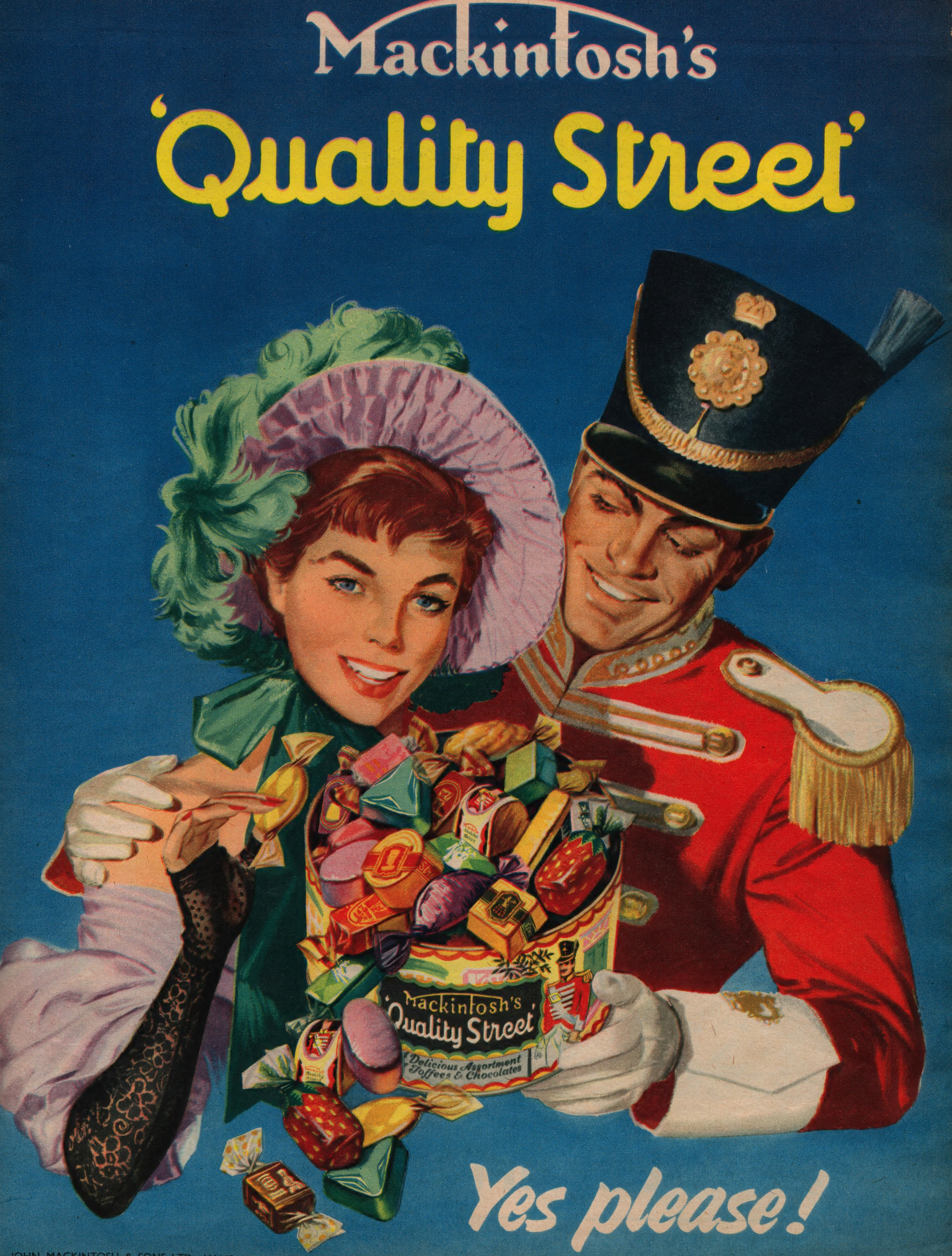
Paint Box

The do-it-yourself husband in the cover illustration (John Bull, March 15) will get it in the neck when he turns round and kicks over the pot of paint standing behind him.

The safest way to avoid that sort of catastrophe is to obtain a shallow box with sides—a tomato box for example—line it with newspaper and stand the paint tins, bottles of turpentine and all the rest of the decorator's paraphernalia inside it.

The whole lot can be moved round in one go, and carried up stepladders without the fear that upset paint will fall on the carpet.—F. C. Lamb, Burnthwaite Road, Liverpool.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post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OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE

A coloured mosaic of turquoise sea, yellow sands, harbour, alley-ways, old houses, nearly-as-old fishermen, painters, pixies and pilchards—this is Cornwall's St. Ives.

True, St. Ives is now a popular holiday resort. But tradition dies hard with Cornishmen: fishermen still chase the Silver Ball in the ancient Shrovetide contest; bonfires are still lit on the hilltops every Midsummer Eve; the visitor is still a welcome "foreigner".

The perfect companions for seeing Britain are the new National Benzole road maps and "Our National Heritage" travel book. The road maps are on sale 1/- each, at National Benzole "solus" garages and filling stations. "Our National Heritage", a survey of the British scene in words and pictures, is introduced by John Moore and contains 115 pages of photographs, miniature maps and descriptive text. Published by Phoenix House in co-operation with the National Benzole Company Ltd., it is on sale at all bookshops, price 12/6d.

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GO SUPER NATIONAL BENZOLE

Fifty million golden eggs

by JEROME HOOD

To cope with the huge demand for eggs production starts in November. Even at prices up to £14 there are never enough

Ten times more Easter eggs are eaten now than before the war. Every year sales increase—and nobody knows why

They're made for children, lovers and kings, of chocolate, cream and caviar; Easter—in an eggshell

On the Wednesday before Easter last year, a young man walked into a Richmond, Surrey, sweet shop, carefully examined the large stock of Easter eggs, and finally bought one. His choice, a handsome confection in milk chocolate, was decorated with marzipan flowers and embellished with the words *My love to you this Easter* in sugar ice. It was filled with chocolates, weighed three and a half pounds and cost him 35s.

Next morning, when Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson, the manageress, opened the shop, the young man was waiting at the door, grimly clutching his Easter egg.

"I shan't be wanting this now," he said. "Can you take it back?"

There were no questions from Mrs. Johnson. A small, sagacious person with a shrewder eye than most for spotting lovers' tiffs, she willingly accepted the egg and returned the young man's money.

"I was sorry for the poor boy," she says, "but there was no risk in taking the egg back. We can't get nearly enough for the sweetheart trade. By midday on Easter Saturday there wasn't an egg left in the shop."

The sweetheart trade, a postwar phenomenon, is only one factor in a mystery that has baffled Mrs. Johnson and the entire chocolate industry for the past ten years: why have the British taken so insatiably to Easter eggs?

Before the war five million chocolate eggs were produced annually in Britain, and they proved hard to sell. Today the figure is 50 million—sufficient for every man, woman and child in the country to have one—and retailers cannot get enough.

The demand, which now is for all sizes from humble cream-filled miniatures at 4d. to splendid caviar-filled giants at £14, became evident soon after the war. Sweets were still on points and people were buying carefully, but the first eggs vanished as soon as they reached the shops.

Output was increased, and it has continued to increase ever since—this year's estimated peak production of three thousand tons will change hands for £2½ million—but supply has still not caught up with demand.

This abnormal appetite for Easter eggs has had wide repercussions. To shift the enormous quantities, shops have started selling earlier—in some cases six weeks before Easter—and the extended sales period has attracted manufacturers in other fields. Greetings cards, novelties and souvenirs have all enjoyed a boomlet in the past few weeks, and many business men predict that the movement started, appropriately, by the egg will soon snowball Easter into a minor Christmas spending spree.

This commercialization, although frowned upon by churchmen, has been welcomed by civic authorities and folk-art societies for its stimulating effect upon many half-forgotten secular ceremonies traditionally associated with Easter.

In Lancashire, Northumberland, Warwickshire and elsewhere in Britain this weekend, the pace-eggers will be out, rolling their decorated hard-boiled eggs against all-comers.

One man who will not be taking part is Peter Gregory, a cheerful young engineer at a chocolate factory near Birmingham. "I don't want to see another egg before November at the earliest," he says. This winter Gregory has helped to produce 14 million chocolate ones, with the assistance of a huge machine sometimes jovially named "the Hen."

"We had occasion to call it a few other names this season," Gregory says. "Easter eggs are tricky things to mass-produce, and the Hen proved temperamental."

The first display of temperament came at the start of the production season in November, when liquid chocolate was not passing properly through the piping system. Suspecting an airlock, Gregory shut off all outlets except one, and in this one inserted a bung.

"The idea was to build up a good head of chocolate inside the pipe to break the airlock and shift the bung. It was all too successful. The pressure came up quicker and stronger than I expected, shooting out the bung with terrific force. Bill Bishop, the foreman, who was standing nearest, got the lot—a complete head- and face-pack in warm chocolate. I've never seen such a perfect moulded shape in my life. You could recognize him only by the whites of his eyes. But they were very eloquent."

The liquid chocolate, after being squirted into half-moulds and agitated to produce an even coating, has to undergo several minutely regulated changes of temperature. When a thermostat failed in the giant machine a few weeks ago, all the eggs produced by a night-shift were found to be two grams overweight. Since it was impossible to make up the loss in output, and retailers were already complaining of low egg quotas, the eggs had to go out. The Hen's tantrum cost the firm two hundredweight of chocolate.

Another hazard is that an operative might lose something inside an egg. One afternoon last winter a girl filling eggs with chocolates missed her engagement ring.

"She'd been looking at it every ten minutes so it should have been in the last thousand or so eggs," says Gregory. "But it wasn't. The eggs had already been cartoned and were on the belts to the packing-room. We X-rayed four thousand before the girl went to the washroom and found the ring where she had left it, beside a wash basin."

To ensure even spreading in the moulds and a less brittle product, mass-produced eggs are made of milk chocolate enriched with cocoa butter. This sweet, fatty chocolate is most popular with ninety per cent of the market in Britain.

Plain chocolate eggs are supreme in fashionable circles. One Piccadilly store, which is patronized by Royalty, stocks few milk chocolate eggs. "We have little demand for them," says Mrs. Suzanne Honey, the confectionery buyer, "although other types are selling better than ever."

These include, beside plain chocolate, models made of papier mâché or straw for figure-conscious customers. Other eggs contain caviar, at £14 for a sixteen-ounce jar, and some customers ask for jewellery, watches or bottles of champagne to be popped in their eggs.

To help people stumped for ideas, Mrs. Honey supplies a stylish, hint-packed brochure. One of her 3½-lb. eggs will easily accommodate such gay trifles as "a pair of Italian raffia shoes by Ferragamo, price £6," leaving ample room for "the latest scent, 'Snob,' by Le Galion; one ounce, £16 10s."

Equally concerned with the interior of Easter eggs is Miss Ellen Parker, a Birmingham chocolate artist, whose speciality is the "interior stage scene." Her two-foot-high eggs, hand-made of plain chocolate, contain a stage one third of the way up the egg, the top curve of which forms a proscenium arch.

Miss Parker's settings, which take up to three weeks to make, include scenes from *Swan Lake* and other ballets, with miniature ballerinas modelled in sugar ice. To execute minute background detail, Miss Parker lights the interior with small torch bulbs strung through the chocolate casing. The practice is not without its risks: once, when she was putting the finishing touches to a scene, the heat from the torch bulbs melted a forest of chocolate trees, which heeled over and demolished the set.

Chocolate busts are another of her Easter novelties. One of the American comedian Bob Hope was commissioned by a group of his admirers. On being presented with his head in chocolate, Hope, pretending to be incensed at the size of the nose, bit it off and munched aggressively. "Always knew it was good enough to eat," he cracked.

To show that the chocolate casing is not beneath her talents, Miss Parker once made a large chocolate filigree egg which created alarm when shown at a foreign convention. The perfect hollow sphere, built entirely of delicate tracery, had no apparent seams or joins. Besieged by despairing chocolate masters, Miss Parker finally revealed her secret: she had piped the chocolate on to an inflated balloon, allowed it to harden and had then slowly deflated the balloon.

Miss Parker, who has been with her employers, a chocolate firm, for more than thirty years, produces her eggs mainly for exhibition. "As a commercial proposition they would have to sell at about £30 each," she says. "Most are raffled and go to children's homes and hospitals."

Although decorated eggs, symbolizing rebirth, have been exchanged at spring festivals since prehistoric times (the word Easter is derived from Eostre, the Teutonic goddess of spring), chocolate eggs have been known only since the last century. Early models were solid and fitted with cosies.

"Pace" eggs (the derivation is from the Hebrew word *pesach* or Passover), which are hens' eggs dyed by being wrapped in coloured material and boiled for several hours, have been used in Britain for centuries and are a central feature of Easter festivities throughout the northern and midland counties.

In Preston and other parts of Lancashire, thousands gather every year to race pace-eggs downhill: unbroken survivors are supposed to win for their owners twelve months of good fortune. In Yorkshire, children play a conker-like game in which pace-eggs are struck together, winner taking all.

In Northumberland, spinsters who venture out without carrying a pace-egg are liable to be challenged to give up their shoes or pay a penalty —usually of the light, romantic kind. And in Coleshill, Warwickshire, any young bachelor who catches a live hare before 10 a.m. can call on the parson and claim one hundred eggs, a calf's head and a groat.

Although the egg as an Easter symbol has proved more popular in Britain than anywhere else —in France and some other countries the hare is customary—the finest Easter eggs were made in pre-revolutionary Russia.

Asked by Tsar Alexander III to create an Easter trinket that would give the Tsarina half an hour's amusement, Carl Fabergé, the court jeweller, supplied a perfect replica of a hen's egg and a bill for £5,000. Inside the egg was a golden yolk; inside the yolk a golden hen; inside the hen a model of the Imperial crown; and inside the crown another egg—a tiny ruby. The delighted Tsar gladly paid Fabergé's bill, and ordered a new egg every year.

At her Richmond sweet shop, Mrs. Johnson numbers less appreciative customers among her clientele. On the Tuesday following Easter last year a boy walked into the shop, stated that he had eaten the contents of his two Easter eggs but not the chocolate shells, and asked what she would allow him on the empties.

Although prepared to help out in the matter of lovers' tiffs before Easter, Mrs. Johnson felt this to be one occasion when she could not oblige. "I sent the young man packing, but I had to laugh," she says. "Even with all the surprises I've had in the Easter egg trade, that was a new one on me."

THE END

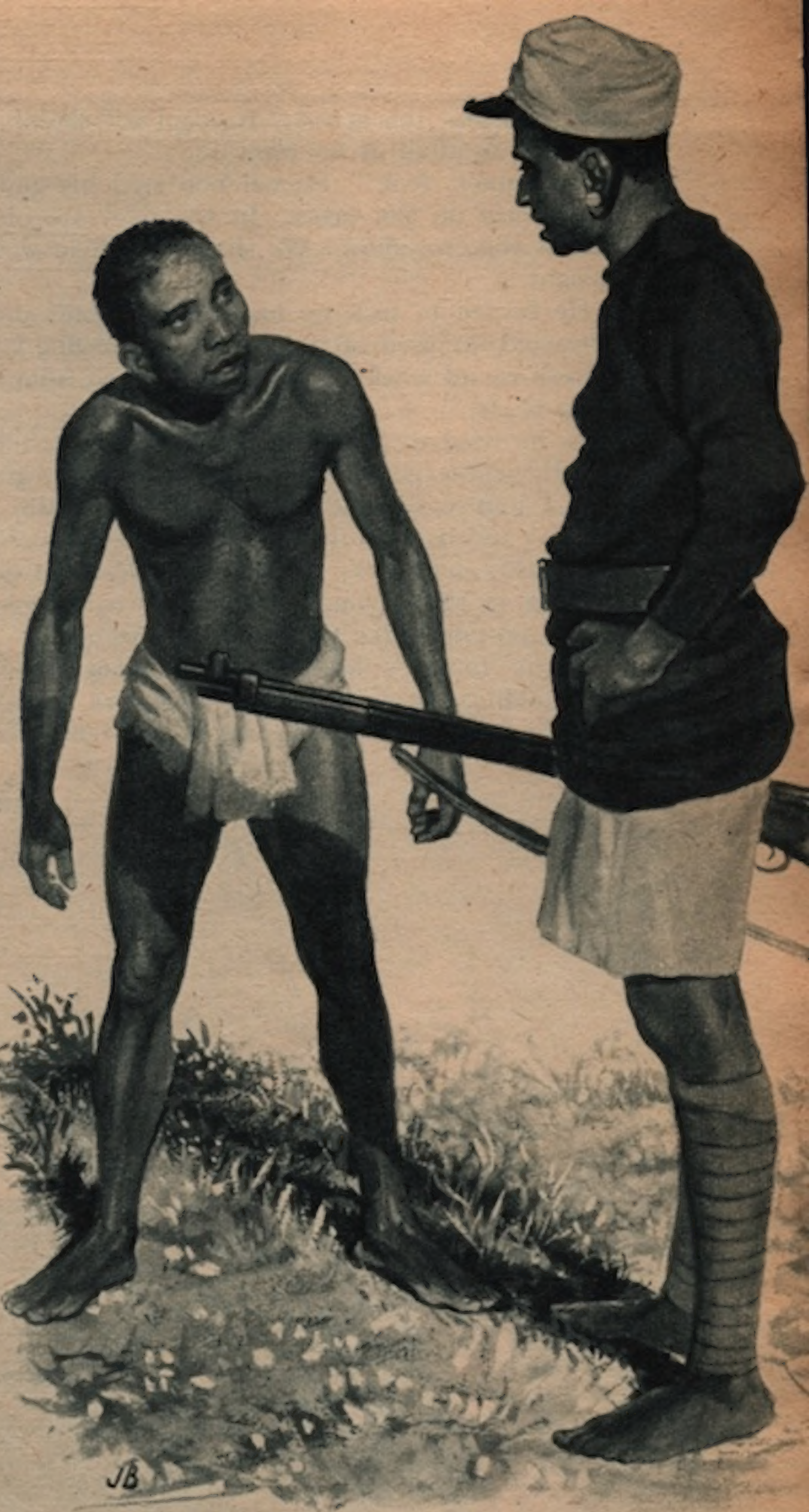
Some customers ask to have bottles of champagne or watches put into their eggs. One store is offering a model containing a pair of shoes

TOTEM SACRIFICE

by ALASTAIR SCOBIE

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN BERRY

Steve Bartell was a murderer—lost in the land of the avenging Honey-hunters



"I am going to the mountains, master," Malimu said. "I must go to the place of the spirits"

It was a grey landscape, grey with heat and lava dust. Thorn trees stood on their own shadows all the way down to the green band that marked a distant river. In the distance the great escarpment of Portuguese East Africa rose sheer out of this low-veld desert, dark under the sun.

There was no beauty in it. It was not a place where men lived. Yet one man moved through the noon heat.

He walked on naked feet, brown puttees rolled with uniform precision round his dusty legs. He wore khaki shorts, an old blue jersey with leather patches, and a brown pill-box hat bearing the proud buffalo-head badge of the British East Africa Game Conservation Department. His name was M'koni.

From time to time M'koni squatted, resting his government-issue .404 rifle against his shoulder as he studied the signs on the ground that told him men had passed this way.

It was evening when M'koni came to the waterholes at Kubai, and there he met Malimu.

"Oh, child, I see you," he greeted the boy.

"I see you, master. I touch your foot," Malimu said nervously.

He was a shy, wild thing, naked but for a strip of cloth, his face covered in white clay. M'koni knew that the boy was of the wandering WaSali people—the Honey-hunters—and that he had just undergone the circumcision ceremony that was the first step to manhood. Now he was out on a mission to prove himself a man.

Malimu stood on one leg and looked at M'koni. He knew this was a great man, a uniformed servant of the white man; one who possessed a rifle. All Malimu could ever hope for was a spear.

"What is your name?" M'koni asked.

"Malimu, master."

"And where are your people?"

"By the river. My clan is trading honey with the WaKwave, in exchange for meat and spears."

M'koni nodded. "This is the place where the white men say no animal is to be killed," he said.

"Why do they say that?" Malimu was always interested in the mad ideas of the white men.

"It is part of their magic. This place is called a game reserve, and is taboo. So tell your people they must not use their spears here. You understand?"

"If you say it is so," the boy said, "it is so."

M'koni nodded ponderously. "Remember it," he said. "Now tell me, have you seen anything of a white man with several wicked Nderobo savages who are killing the elephants against the wishes of the white men in government?"

"I saw their tracks and that is all."

M'koni glared at the boy. "If you lie to me I shall beat you, my child. Now, where are you supposed to be going in this bad country?"

"I am going to the mountains, master," the boy said. "I must go to the place of the spirits. My father is the great witch-man, Lokoni, and he has given me a task. I must go to the totem place and talk to the totem."

Impressed, M'koni nodded. "Then go sweetly, child. And if you see these bad men, keep clear of them, for they are devils. If they thought you might spy on them, they would. . . ." M'koni drew his finger across his throat.

Malimu nodded quickly. Then, without speaking again, backed away into the grey mass of tangled thorn bush and was soon lost to sight. Grinning, M'koni shook his head. He was used to the ways of the strange, shy Honey-hunters. He pulled his snuff-box from the extended lobe of his ear and sniffed deeply.

It was then that he heard the shot.

It was the voice of a heavy rifle, a .450 perhaps. Sullen echoes slammed back from the distant hills. M'koni judged that the rifle had been fired half a mile away. He checked the action of his .404 mechanically, as he had been trained to do, then loped off towards the hills, travelling at a steady bush trot. In the game reserve a rifle shot could mean only one thing: poaching. . . .

* * *

Steve Bartell stood, with his double-barrelled .450 Holland still half raised, watching the elephant he had shot sink slowly to its knees. It was a reasonable bull; tusks going to about seventy pounds a side. Dust rose as the big brute finally let go his hold on life and crashed over.

"Get the men on to chopping out the tusks," Bartell told Korogoi, his gunbearer.

Five or six other Nderobo crept out of the bush and began to hack at the hard tissue around the tusks with spears and sharp hatchets.

Bartell leaned his rifle against a tree, found tobacco and rolled himself a cigarette. He was jumpy, at hair-trigger tension. He knew that the game wardens and scouts were after him. His hidden storehouse in the deep bush was full of ivory, and he was anxious to get going as soon as he could.

He'd make a short portage to the river; then canoe into Portuguese territory; and, last of all, take a swift dhow to the Malabar coast.

The monsoon was setting in, and prices for ivory were highest in India. . . .

Behind him a voice said, in KiSwahili: "Put up your hands, *bwana*, and face the tree."

The men who were hacking at the tusks froze, watching M'koni walk out of the thorn forest. The safety catch was off the ugly-looking .404. He held it competently, butt cradled on his hip, forefinger on the trigger, thumb ready on the bolt.

One of the tribesmen reached for a spear and the .404 spat a long stab of orange flame. A bullet slammed into the dead elephant not a foot from the spearman's hand.

An ejected cartridge tinkled on the stones at M'Koni's feet.

For a second nobody moved. Bartell started to raise his hands. Then he dropped and rolled sideways, pulling a revolver from his belt and firing as he landed on his left shoulder. He saw M'koni drop his rifle, spin gracefully like a ballet dancer, fall on to his face, jerk a moment, and lie still. The blood ran and blackened in the lava dust.

"The damned fool," Bartell said, rising.

Korogoi and another native ran to Bartell's side. "*Bwana*, this is bad," Korogoi said shakily. "This is an affair of the rope."

"Be quiet, fool." Bartell holstered his gun. "Get busy on the tusks. In the river are our friends the crocodiles. We shall feed them well tonight."

He turned to pick up his elephant rifle, and extracted the used cartridge. He was feeling for a fresh round when he sensed light flash from a spear-blade.

As he tried to grope for his revolver, Bartell felt the spear go in, deep and hard. Korogoi struck him across the side of the head with a hatchet and he fell into the dust. Hands sought the money belt under his shirt and he could do nothing to stop them. The world went black, with loud noises like the sound of insects.

Above Bartell's fallen body Korogoi stood, still holding the sharp axe. "This was a wise thing," he said to the spearman. "Let us take both bodies to the river. Did he think us fools? Must we hang in prison for his foolishness?"

Nervously the Nderobo spearman said: "Korogoi, old friend, what you say is true. But this is a bad business and I do not like to touch dead men for fear of the ghosts. Let us divide the money and go, quickly. Later, when things are quiet, we can come back for all the ivory."

They divided the money and headed for the river, but at Muddo Kahli they found an Indian trader with beer to sell. He got them drunk, listened to their tale, took the money, and sent his lorry for the police. . . .

Bartell awoke with the taste of dust in his mouth. It was the fine lava dust that had clogged the wound on his head and stopped the bleeding. The spear was still in his back. He twisted his body, cursing at the pain, and jerked sharply at the haft until the blade came loose.

Blood ran down his back. He ripped off his shirt, made a pad of it and leaned against a tree, trying to stop the flow.

Through the trees the sun was low, shining through a gold and crimson haze. It would soon be dark. He lay back against the tree, and after a while found his consciousness draining away with the last of the light.

When he woke again, it was morning. The jagged wound in his back had stopped bleeding but throbbed painfully. His head ached abominably.

"But I'm alive, by God," he said aloud, feeling the terrible dryness of his mouth. The dead elephant stank vilely of corruption, and Bartell saw the misshapen form of a hyena steal among the thorn trees.

His big revolver still lay in the dust and he picked it up and holstered it. Then he rose carefully, shakily and began to walk towards the river; a human crab, scuttling along, bent over and driven by his determination not to die.

He had stumbled nearly a mile down the slope when he heard the soft sound of a reed flute blow sharply somewhere ahead. Cautiously he knelt under a clump of grey thorns, watching the veld.

Damn them! There was a white man in well-pressed drill and a blue peaked cap; an African cop with a sawn-down shotgun; and, leading them, a *kingozi*, a Masai tracker, bent half double like a hunting dog on the scent. It was the *kingozi* who had blown the reed pipe. Bartell heard an answering call away to the right.

Moving fast, he painfully made his way back up the slope, keeping to the rock outcrops and boulders, avoiding making tracks for them to follow. There were vultures now, wheeling above where the elephant and M'koni lay. At a bet the patrols would make for them.

He could forget the river, he thought. He was hurt too badly to try to get past the patrols, especially if they had Masai spearmen out. In any case the river tribes were treacherous; friends when you could bribe them, but always ready to betray you for a few shillings.

Yet he had somehow to reach Portuguese territory where his hunting truck was hidden. Somehow he must drive to the coast. There he had accomplices, the Arab and Indian specialists in the dangerous trade of smuggling anything from a nugget of gold to a ton of ivory; from a harem veil to a thousand illegal immigrants.

THE river was barred to him now and patrols would be watching the low-veld tracks. There remained only the mountains. He limped on, trying to remember what he had heard about a way up the escarpment. He had heard the Nderobo talk of it—a path up the course of a stream that led through thick vegetation to a pool and a waterfall, almost at the top of the three thousand foot high scarp. He must find a guide, but there was little chance of that.

Yet to give in was to die. At least there would be water on the rising ground. . . .

Towards noon, with the soft blowing of the reed whistles somewhere below him in the thick, grey scrub, Bartell found water. It was only a deep, dirty pit dug by an elephant in the bed of a dried-up stream, filthy with mud and dung, but it was water. Bartell washed out his mouth. He felt stronger and the delirium of pain was eased.

He was trying to gather himself for the next step of his journey when he saw a thin, shy figure staring at him from behind a thin fringe of trees.

"*Kuja hapa,*" he commanded, and the boy Malimu came towards him like a scared, wild animal.

"*Kabala gani wewe?*"

The boy said he was of the WaSali people. Bartell managed a cracked grin. The People of Honey, the WaSali, were the finest guides in all Africa.

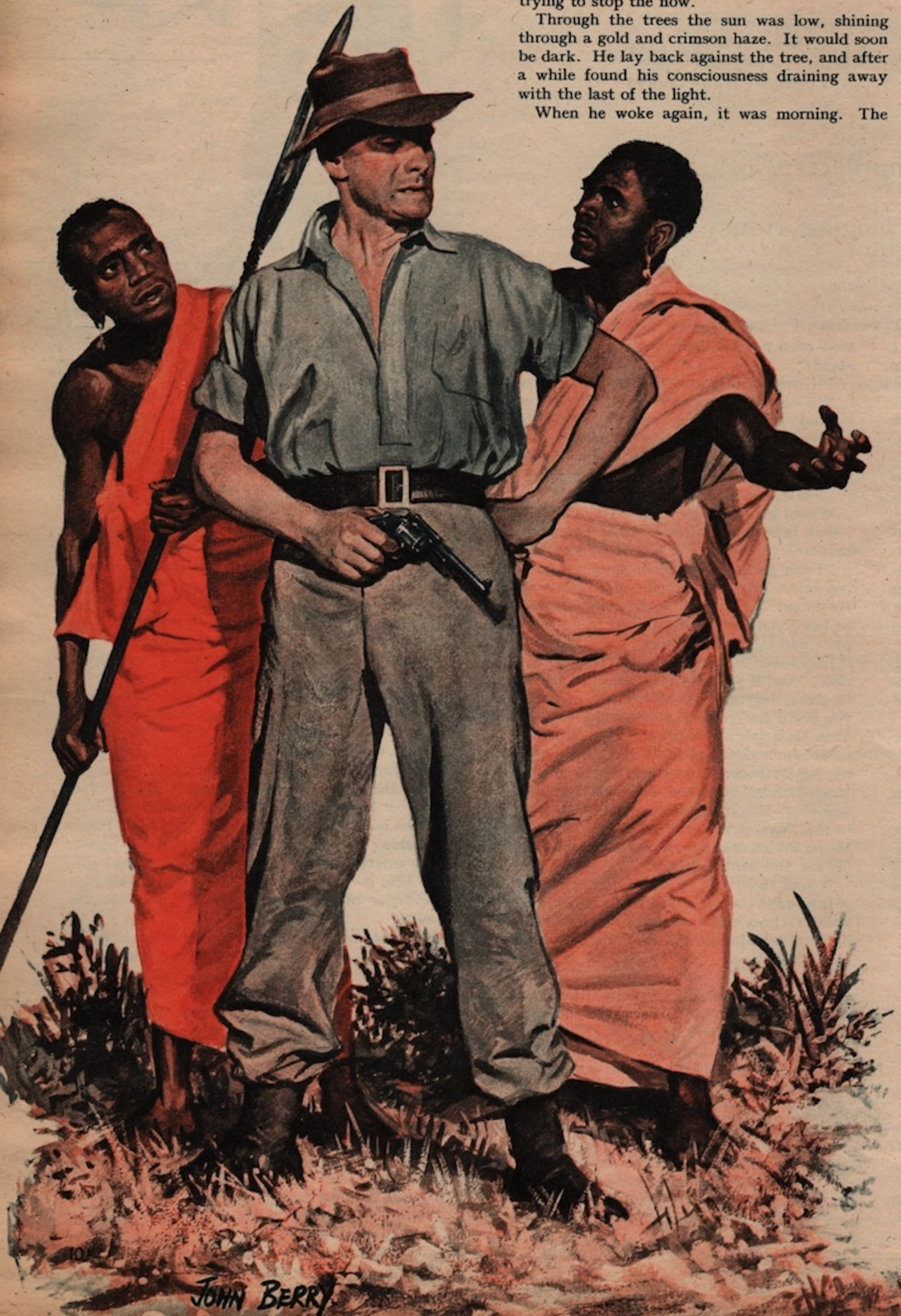
"And your name?"

"Malimu."

"How old are you?"

"The year of hippos."

Bartell calculated. It was fourteen years since



Korogoi and a Nderobo ran to Bartell's side. "*Bwana*, this is bad," Korogoi said shakily. "This is an affair of the rope"

the great drought when the lakes had dried up and the hippos had died in their thousands. The boy was fourteen.

"I shall give you money," Bartell said.

The boy watched him with dark, terrified eyes.

"You will guide me over the hills, to the land of the WaPortugezi," Bartell told him.

The big eyes widened with horror. "No, *bwana*. I must go to the grove of spirits and sit three nights. I am of the family of Lokoni, the great witch-man, and I follow my father. He has listened to the spirits and they have set me this task. I cannot guide you."

Bartell knew the terrible weight of superstition a primitive man carries with him, an invisible load of terror. This boy would rather die than offend the spirits.

Well, he should have his choice. Bartell pulled the big revolver. "You will be my guide, Malimu, or you shall be with the spirits sooner than you desire."

"If I take you, I must die, *bwana* . . . or you must die."

Bartell heaved himself to his feet. "Lead on," he said. "Six feet in front of me. And no tricks, or I shall do as I have said."

The boy turned without a word and made a graceful movement that meant "Follow." Bartell grinned again, cracking the mask of slaked dust on his face. Already he felt stronger, for he knew the mind of an African, knew how despair and destiny would guide the boy now, how he would become an automaton, a mindless dead man, and how he would lead the way over the mountains.

And then? Then the boy would have to die, of course.

In front of Bartell, Malimu moved with an easy, loping stride, neither speaking nor turning. His back was soon caked with the grey dust and streaked with sweat. They moved out on to the plain, where the volcanic ash and brittle lava rock tore at the feet; on, towards the mountains that loomed above them now like great clouds. Remote, terrible, the home of all the gods.

At evening Bartell tied the boy's hands with his gunbelt, lashing him firmly to a young sapling, then lay down and slept.

He woke at first light, the ashes of the fire he had built against wild beasts not yet cold. His wound ached but had ceased to throb.

The boy drooped forward against the tough leather that cut into his arms. He was inert, yet not sleeping. Bartell untied him. "Move," he commanded.

Soon they were walking uphill, through park-like country of green, open glades, towards the first steel-grey barrier of rock.

The boy moved with his head down, with no need to stop to check by landmarks or memory. Yet there seemed no break in the grey rock barrier ahead.

"You are sure of the way?" Bartell asked.

"Yes, *bwana*. I know the way." Malimu was mournful, submissive.

"You are sure?" Bartell insisted. "Have you been here before?"

"It is one of the sacred places of our people."

Bartell was satisfied, remembering that this was a witch-man's son. He wondered idly what strange things the WaSali worshipped. Some tribes worshipped snakes; some leopards or crocodiles; some unseen spirits, or highly coloured mountain gods; some seemed to have no religion save a vague ancestor worship; some worshipped the gods of fertility; some the gods of death.

They reached the foot of the escarpment and went into a dark, hidden cleft behind thick bush. Water gurgled somewhere above, the lazy sound of a small waterfall. Then the cleft widened and was revealed as a steeply rising staircase of rock, worn in the mountain by a river which splashed and dappled its way down to lose itself in the lava dust of the plains.

The cleft began to narrow again. The vegetation got thicker, wilder, the path more restricted. Wild flowers and ferns grew everywhere. Once they saw the yellow flash of a leopard's coat among the tumbled mountain boulders.

As he led the way still higher, Malimu thought: *Either I will kill this man or he will kill me. If I kill this man, I can have the secret mark tattooed on my right temple to show the world that I have killed men.*

He had heard old men talk of the sacrifices in the grove of spirits and he knew how the thing was done. How fine it would be to go back to his own people as a witch-man with a sacrifice to the totem already made.

Malimu, the Honey-hunter, walked almost gaily up the cleft towards the grove of spirits.

Bartell was sweating up the cleft behind him. The spear wound was clogged and dry. In Portuguese territory he would rob a farmhouse for food and clothes; money, if possible; then steal a car and head for the coast. It could be done by a man bold enough.

Once over the crest he could get rid of the boy, pushing the body into one of the fissures that opened out here and there in the volcanic formation of the mountain. So he toiled upwards, keeping always alert. Because he was a cunning man himself, he knew the boy might lead him into a trap—a village of his people, perhaps.

They splashed through a knee-deep pool, then moved up a slope down which the little river rushed into a narrow, dark passage between two high, smooth walls of rock. The floor was choked with round boulders and the river filled it from side to side, so that they had to wade upwards.

Suddenly the narrow cleft opened into the bright sun. They came into an amphitheatre, a perfect bowl perhaps two hundred yards across. Down the almost sheer side opposite a waterfall dropped a hundred feet into a great, silent pool that filled the amphitheatre as water fills the bottom of a cup.

Growing up every side of the bowl were tall, silent trees, clinging to the steep slope, except where the earth walls had collapsed, leaving fissured scars, with the trees drooping their branches in the lake itself. One path, trodden in the past by natives or animals, led round the lip of the pool and wound across the opposite wall. There was the noise of the waterfall and a distant hum of insects. The place was bright with flowers.

Bartell paused, feeling danger instinctively—feeling, had he but known it, the primitive awareness of danger that had made this place holy to the shy, savage tribe of Honey-hunters.

The boy walked proudly now, stepping the path ahead of Bartell as if in a hurry to be done with this affair.

"Stop, you blighter," Bartell called to him. "No tricks, I tell you."

The boy stopped and turned, laughing, his square white teeth showing behind his drawn-back lips.

"Now you die," he said simply.

Bartell thumbed back the hammer of his big gun. But Malimu only laughed. "The spirits of this place will come to you and you will die terribly."

"Maybe the spirits will get lead poisoning," Bartell said grimly.

The boy laughed again, and Bartell, uneasy now, scared and yet angry at his own fear, aimed at the boy and squeezed back on the trigger. But, as he levelled the gun, the boy jumped sideways into one of the deep earth fissures, went rolling down head over heels, sliding, bouncing, until he landed beneath the branches of a fallen tree by the side of the great pool. The shot missed by yards. The echoes thundered off the rock face and slammed back from the water.

Bartell tried to make out the body of the boy, inert beneath the camouflage of leaves. He fired again, experimentally, into the boy's hiding place. The echoes stopped and he heard the boy laugh.

Then he heard another, more terrible sound.

The hum of insects had grown louder. It had become a dull, menacing roar, the sound of an enemy squadron intent on death. Bartell guessed at once the totem of the WaSali, the Honey-hunters: bees. And this was their sacred place. . . .

The little brown kaffir bees had been disturbed from their natural hives in the crevices of the grove of spirits. They dived now, angry, seeking the intruder. The white sun darkened as they came by the million, a mindless, wicked swarm of death. They fastened on Bartell's face, head, arms. He beat at them a moment in blind panic, turned to run, with the swarm pursuing him.

Then sense returned. He threw away the gun. There was still a way out. He ran to the pool, dived deep, swam.

SAFE beneath the branches of the fallen tree, Malimu, the witch-doctor's son, saw the man go down, saw the great pall of bees hanging like a curtain over the surface of the pool. As Bartell's head broke water they struck at him again, and again he dived. So it was in the stories the old men told—a sacrifice would rise and rise again, until at last, blinded by stings, tortured beyond reason, he would prefer to drown.

Four, five times Bartell's head rose, and each time the bees, hanging in a wicked cloud between the water and the sun, dived in their brown squadrons to the attack. Until at last the ripples on the pond died and were still and, after a while, grumbling, the great swarm began to drift off into the crevices that were their homes.

For a long time the boy lay there, smiling, watching them. He did not fear the bees, for he was of their totem, and they knew that he was a master of them.

THE END

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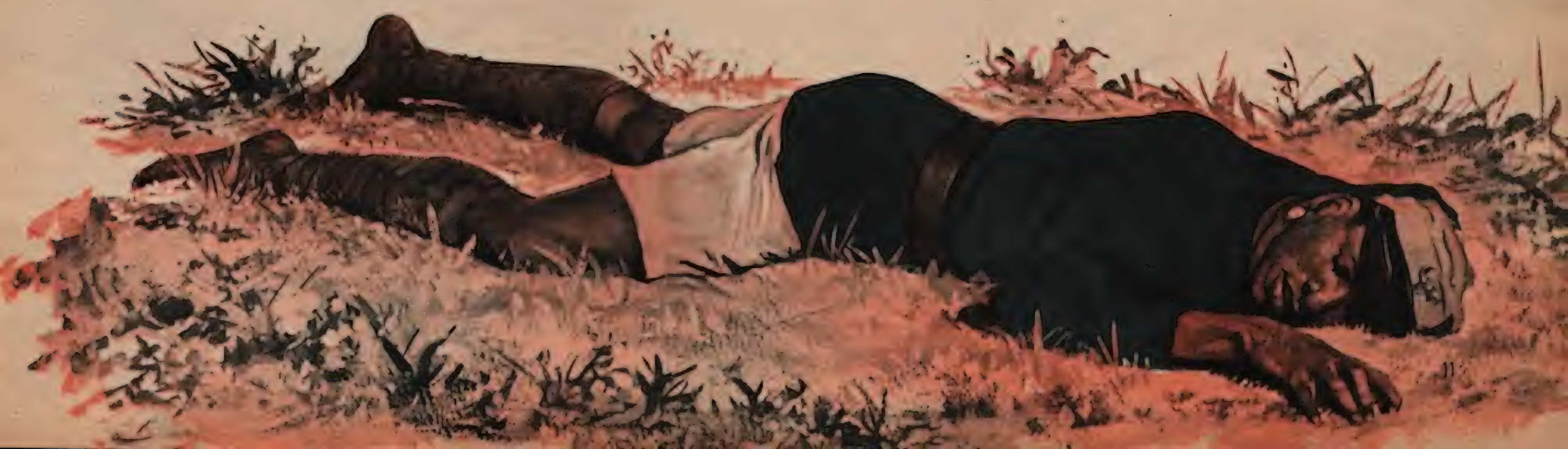


IN SHORT

Success Story

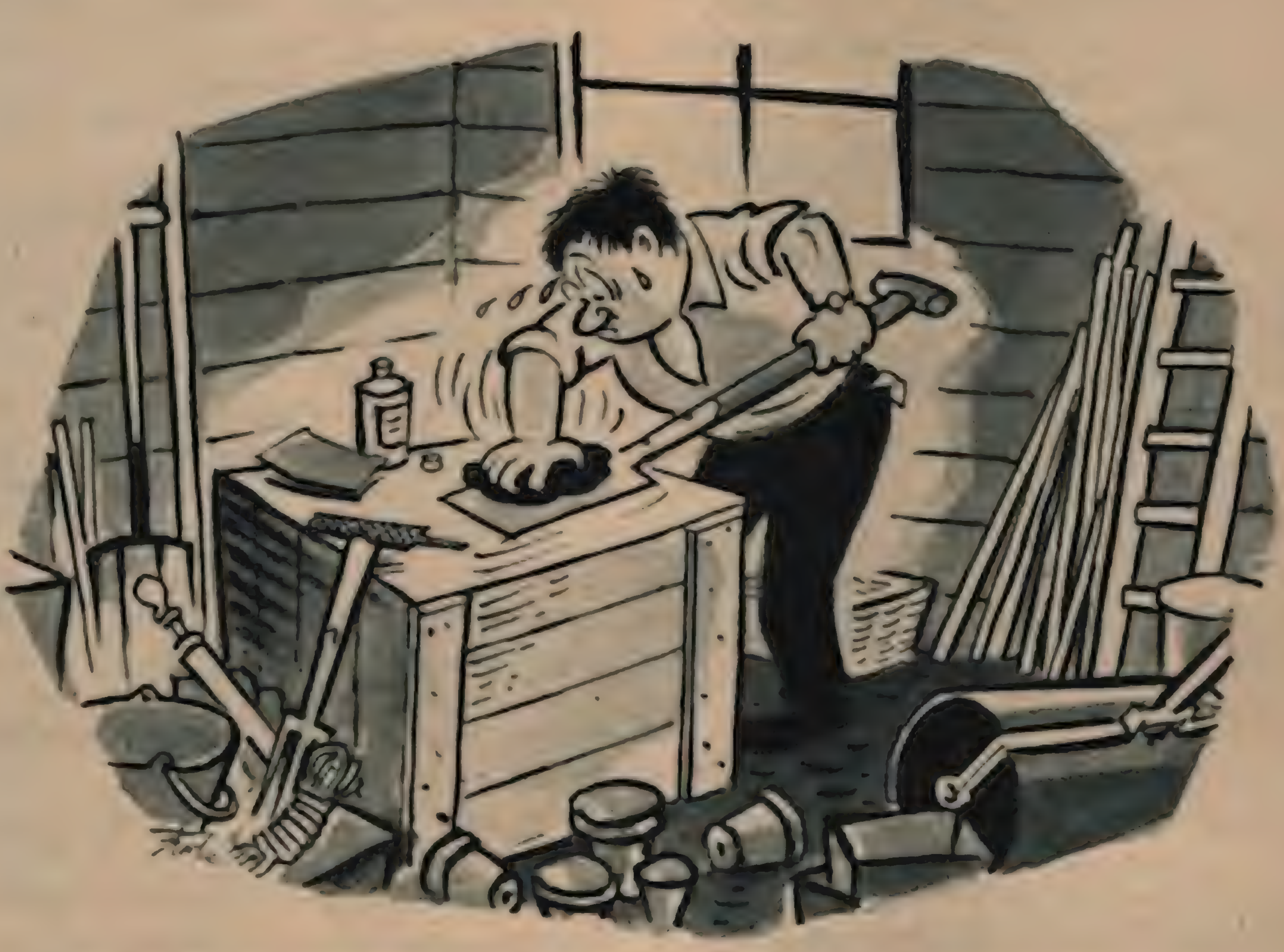
A doctor has found the highest incidence of ulcers among wealthy executives.—News item.

However low a man may start,
If he's industrious and smart
And closely hoards each precious penny,
He may rise up above the many
And get to be, if he should live,
An affluent executive.

Then when at last the fight is won
And all the scrimping years are done,
And he has got the cash it takes
To buy him lobsters, chops and steaks,
He lies in bed, in robe of silk,
And slowly sips a glass of milk.

RICHARD ARMOUR

Starke's Guide To Gardening



"Some of the drudgery can be taken out of digging merely by working with a clean, bright spade which has an especially sharp cutting edge"

Have You Any Complaints?

I bought this corkscrew here the other day. I thought it seemed such a good idea. Yes, that's the bottle with it: I'll come to that in a minute. According to your salesman all I had to do was let the gadget do the work for me. I thought I'd finished with all that teeth-gritting and knee-bending and arm-wrenching and strain on the lumbago muscles.

I saw myself chatting gaily to my guests while the cork was coming out. That's something I've never managed to do while wielding the common-or-garden corkscrew. Grunts, yes. Muttered oaths, yes. But never anything light-hearted. So I chucked my old corkscrew away. What's that? Of course I know there's a queue behind me. I can feel its shopping baskets. Now, where was I when you interrupted?

Right. I did everything the instructions told me. I inserted the point of the instrument lightly into the cork. I fitted these spring-clamps here round the neck of the bottle. I pressed down this little lever and started turning the handle. I hope I'm putting you in the picture? Nothing much happened at first, though my brother-in-law thinks he saw the bottle bulge. Then suddenly the cork was forced violently downwards into the drink. You can see it down there now bobbing about and ruining the taste. We can't get at it because, look, the spring-clamps are so strong you can't get the damn thing off.

So you can take this back and give me another bottle of wine and an old-fashioned corkscrew. And some liniment.

R. G. G. PRICE

Sigh

What wouldn't I give to live in state
In Persia as a potentate,
Spending my time, as spent in Persia,
Either in harem or inertia.

IAN HEALY

Other People's Letters

My misfortunes are too prosaic to be narrated. Briefly, on my way south, in a hamlet some twenty miles north of Ulm, the car ruptured a vital organ. Then came all the bothers that follow such accidents—refuge in an impossible inn with no bedclothes and primitive sanitation, taking the car to pieces in a shed to find what was wrong, putting her together again, getting horses to drag her to the nearest railway station, negotiating for transport with a country station master, persuading her into a truck after baffling the plans of the shunters for smashing her by impossible methods . . . getting her . . . through a French station and a German station (not on speaking terms) with two customs houses to negotiate, speaking German fluently to the Frenchmen and French fluently to the Germans and understanding neither of them (I am the most deplorable of linguists); all this is simply tragic for me. . . .

On such occasions I miss Charlotte who, when in the smallest difficulty, demands information and assistance from every bystander. . . .

Stella, do not ever bully me: you don't know how easily frightened I am. Women never do realize what timid weak creatures men are.

Who wrote this letter? See foot of last column.

Member Of The Wedding

Why is the bride such a long time?

Brides are always a bit late.

Were you a bit late?

Certainly.

Didn't Daddy mind?

Of course he minded. Now keep your voice down. Here they come.

Is the bride the lady in white?

Yes.

Why is her face all covered up? Has she had an accident? I said why is her face——

Shush. That's her veil.

Is that man leading her because she can't see?

Yes. No. That's her father. He's giving her away.

Is he fed up with her, then? I said is he fed up with her?

If you don't keep your voice down I'll take you out.

Why is that lady crying?

That's the bride's mother. I expect she's a bit sad.

Would she sooner keep her?

I'll explain later.

What's the vicar saying, Mummy?

He's asking if they will marry each other.

But isn't that what we've come here for? Do you think they forgot to tell him? I said do you think they forgot——

LIONEL DAVIDSON

Foreign Affairs

Water for the British Columbia town of Little Prairie has to be carried over long distances, then filtered and purified. The manager of a local hotel was shocked to hear from his auditors that the water he served cost him more than the whisky.

Yokohama livestock dealer Shinroku Takanashi praised his twenty-two year old maid for the "comfortable, hot bath" she had prepared for him. He discovered later that notes worth 566,913 yen (about £567) were missing. The maid had burned them to light the fire.

Liberty Sam Lalomia of Detroit petitioned U.S. authorities for permission to drop the "Liberty" from his name—because he was getting married.

The letter was written by George Bernard Shaw to Mrs. Patrick Campbell.

Red tape is putting up the nation's bill for good health. It may be slipped discs or sleeping pills—the cost could be slashed by common sense

by DR. BRIAN ANSON

The family doctor should issue separate prescriptions—even for small items like dressings. Many save expense by deliberately breaking rules

Does the doctor waste your money?

ONE morning recently, during my round of calls on patients, I looked in on an elderly woman who has suffered for years from eczema. Gallons of calamine and pounds of zinc cream have been used on her arms and legs, with no more than temporary relief. But at last science has come to her aid with the new hydrocortisone ointment, and her skin is looking healthier than it has done for many years. I prescribed another thirty grammes—just over an ounce.

"That won't last long, Doctor," she said.

"Eke it out," I replied. "Spread it as thin as you can. That little bit costs two pounds."

I went on to see a young mother who had been laid up with bronchitis. Before the war she would have been taking a cheap cough mixture, perhaps inhaling steam and friar's balsam. Her illness would have dragged on for weeks and might have turned to pneumonia. Now a course of penicillin capsules, costing about 33s., had cleared it up in a week.

Modern drugs are expensive, and they account for a large proportion of the huge bill for the National Health Service. But they do work. They save lives. They save expensive hospital treatment, and they prevent a great many people from becoming invalids.

Unfortunately some germs are getting tough. My next patient was a young man with an infected hand and arm which did not respond to penicillin. His trouble is clearing up on one of the newer antibiotics, tetracycline. Four capsules a day, for ten days, cost £5.

Being a taxpayer as well as a doctor, I am sometimes alarmed at the enormous cost of the drugs I prescribe, and I do seek to balance it by what small economies I can. For instance, a youth came into my surgery saying that he had fallen off his motor-cycle and hurt his leg. I found an enormous bruise on his thigh. Like all bruises, it would get well by itself in about three or four weeks, but the young man thought he should have something to rub in.

I told him: "The best cure for that is plenty of exercise, to get the circulation going." And I saved the small cost of a bottle of unnecessary liniment.

I save quite a lot of money, I confess, by deliberately breaking the rules. The health service abounds in bureaucratic regulations devised by people with no understanding of how a doctor's work is done.

Late at night I was called to a man who was not really ill but restless and unable to sleep. All he needed was a couple of sleeping capsules and I should have issued a prescription so that his wife could knock up the chemist and get them. Their net cost is 6d., but with the dispensing fee, the late hour and so on, the chemist would be paid about half a crown. This is so idiotic, wasteful and generally irritating that, like most doctors, I handed over a couple of sleeping pills.

The same rule, strictly applied, means that every dressing and every injection of penicillin must be separately prescribed. But I use dressings from my surgery and take penicillin from a bottle in my bag. To replace them—and the sleeping pills—I write a prescription for a reasonable quantity, take it to the chemist and pay the shilling myself. I am out of pocket about 5s. a week, I have committed gross irregularities and am subject to censure. But it is the only way I can do my job, and the country is saved quite a lot on its drug bill. There is so much red tape in the health service that I sometimes wonder what would happen if all doctors worked to rule.

HOW THE BILL IS MADE UP

In July the total cost of your stamp for insurance and health contributions will be raised to 18s. 2d. The health service's share of this is 2s. 4d.; you pay 1s. 10½d., the employer 5½d.

* * *

An adult woman's health contribution will be 1s. 4½d.

* * *

Individual contributions make up 14·2 per cent of the cost of the health service.

* * *

The average prescription bill is 6s.; your doctor earns an average of 4s. 6d. for each call.

* * *

Britain's drug bill works out at about £1 a head: the manufacturer's price is 2s. 5d. for twelve penicillin tablets, 1s. 8d. for four c.c.s of streptomycin and 9d. for a hundred phenobarbitone tablets. Vitamin B tablets cost 2s. 9d. a hundred.

* * *

In 1956 eye tests alone cost £3½ million. Each year 60,000 hearing aids, 4½ million pairs of spectacles and 1½ million sets of false teeth are prescribed.

* * *

The National Health Service estimate for 1958 is £740 million.

I have a very old patient who, over the years, has become less and less able to use his legs. The time came when he needed a wheelchair to get about his little bungalow. The obvious person to help seemed to be the county welfare officer, who is charged with the care of old people. But the welfare officer has no power to order a chair. Indeed, I have yet to find any powers the poor man has. He must lead a most frustrating life.

He suggested the Red Cross, who lend out chairs at no cost to the taxpayer. The Red Cross were very willing, but their chairs were too big for the bungalow doors. My proper course, I was told, was to refer the old man to a hospital consultant who would be able to certify that he needed a chair.

So an appointment was made, and an ambulance took the patient to hospital and back to his home. Some weeks later an official arrived at the bungalow saying: "I hear you want a chair. You shall have one." A month later it arrived, but it was too wide for the doorways, and the file of correspondence about changing it for a smaller one continues.

"Passing the buck" in matters of expense is rampant. Hospitals often save on their drug bills by sending the family doctor a note asking him to prescribe some expensive remedy. Family doctors' drugs are paid for by executive councils, not by regional boards, so the hospital keeps its costs down—but the drug bill still goes up. It is all quite silly; the cost comes out of the same pockets in the end—yours and mine.

Of course, modern treatment restores health and working ability to thousands of people who might otherwise die or become crippled. To regard it as a luxury would be ridiculous.

A patient of mine had polio two years ago. He spent six months in hospitals, which first saved his life and then, in spite of paralysed legs, taught him to get about and earn his living again. He was provided with a small car. The whole thing cost him nothing, and he is now in full-time employment. His treatment cost £600, and his car another £400, but the result is a man who can do a job and contribute to the national output, instead of a cripple dependent on the state for the rest of his life

Any health service which undertakes complete

Continued on page 34

Splendid

As Dinah Leece topped the long bank guarding the estuary, the wind met her with a salty sting. The taste of it was different from the air of the fells; it was more challenging. It gave her a sudden and curious sense of buoyancy. She was glad to think that she would be coming here once a fortnight to look around her father's four hundred hoggs, wintering by the sea from October to April.

A little way down the slope she paused. Below her stretched flat greenery, threaded by the widening Ire, and on the far side climbed another bank, crowned by larch and pine. Westward the Solway shone blue-grey and silver, its near fringes creamed by the incoming tide. She glanced inland, and the far fells that barred the narrowing dale had the lofty vagueness of clouds.

A pound a head this grazing was costing her father, and it was worth it, too. Sheep in their first year could find grass here right through the starving months, while up yonder, among crag and dead bracken and stony, acid tilts, there would be nothing but the bleakest nibbling.

Dinah began to walk slowly in the direction of the sea, her hazel eyes alert, her hair a bronze and dancing halo. There was always the chance of a hogg getting caught up in brambles, writhing and twisting until it was held crucified by the spiky halter.

The other risk came from the gutters that scored the sand and mud and Cumberland turf. At low water the hoggs were tempted to cross them in search of juicy grazing farther seaward. With the turn of the tide they could be cut off by the swift swirl which filled the channels within minutes.

She was soon to discover a victim. Half a mile nearer the mouth of the estuary she heard dismal blaring. There it was, a small woolly blob marooned on a triangle of wet sand, the sea sliding closer and closer. She broke into a run until she reached the gutter that barred the hogg's escape. It was eight feet wide, almost bank high, and swishing like a millrace.

There was nothing she could do. The pity of it set up an ache in her throat. Very soon that scared blaring would be choked into silence, and a sodden, woolly carcass would be washed ashore higher up the river.

In the vain hope of coaxing the hogg to attempt the swim, Dinah stood on the very edge, shouting. The answer was another dismal blare. Then a man's voice seemed to float across on the wind.

She turned quickly. Only a few inches above the surface of the sea the nose of a duck-punt was edging towards the gutter. It swung in with the swirl. A short, broad paddle dabbed sideways. A brown arm appeared, and a swift hand dug a grapnel into the bank.

The punt veered broadside with the current. A young man leaped on to the sand, and spattered through the surf behind the hogg. It made a frightened dart forward and saw the punt like a partial bridge. That was enough. Small hoofs picked their way across. A two-foot jump landed it safely, and it scurried away still blaring.

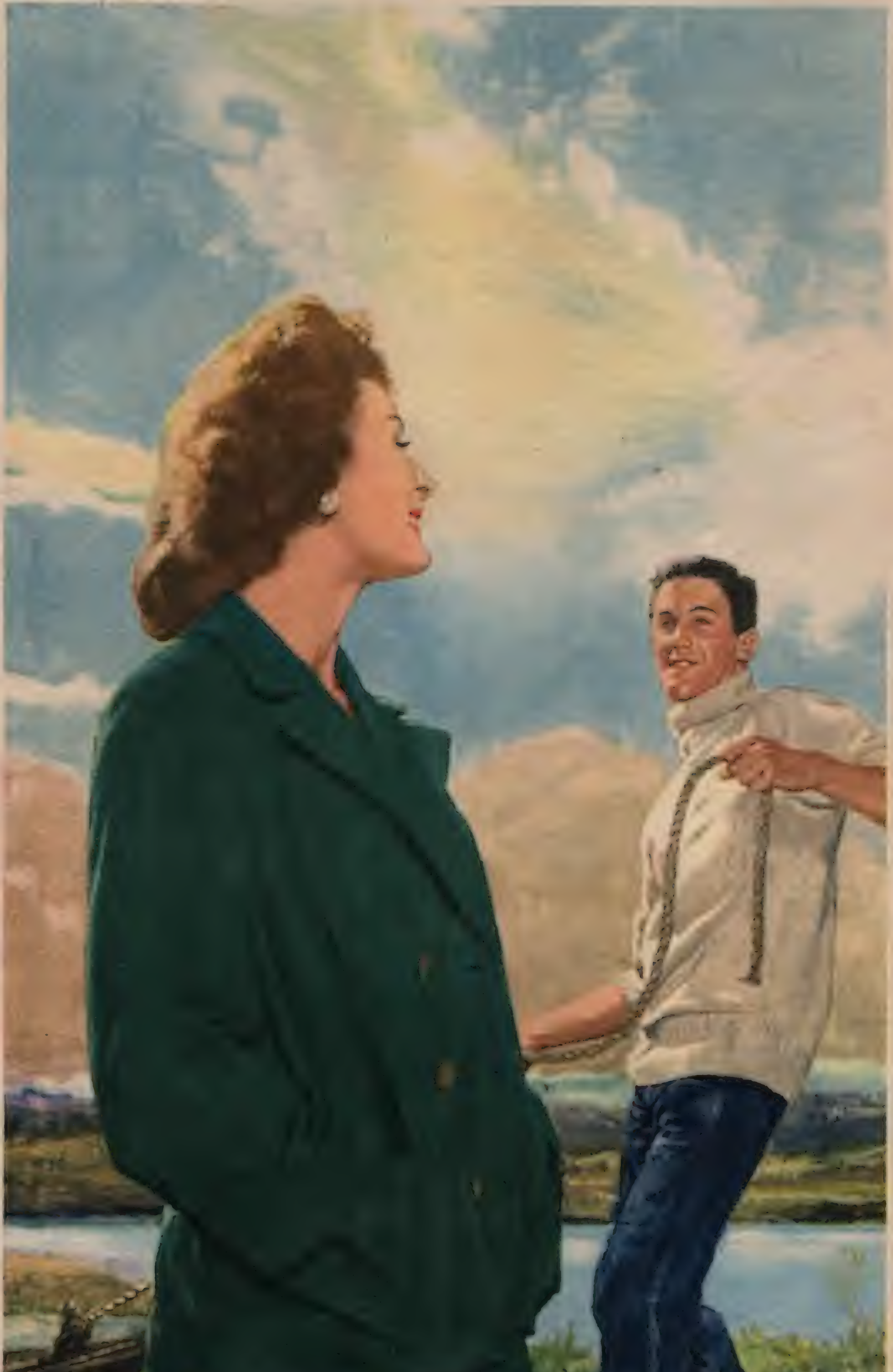
The young man grinned at Dinah, returned to the punt, paddled on into the river itself, and came ashore on a shallow spit. She was waiting there to thank him.

He said: "Nay, it was nothing. Feckless things, them sheep." He was looking at her . . . and in a fashion that gave her uneasy pleasure. No dales lad ever had this brown, salty litheness and those intensely blue eyes, as deep and impersonal as the sea. No dales lad ever had this jet black hair and a smile that might mean anything.

They began to talk. He told Dinah that he was a wildfowler and had been at the game since childhood. Until recently he had lived thirty miles farther up the Solway.

Then he said: "This summer I was given the chance of yon, and I took it."

Dinah followed the direction of his pointing finger. In the shadow of the pines and larches



The stranger was looking at Dinah . . . and in a fashion that gave her uneasy pleasure

Freedom

by DUDLEY HOYS

The man Dinah married would have to be human—certainly not this wild wanderer who broke their date in springtime

high on the ridge stood a solitary wooden hut.

"You live there?"

"Aye. Why not?"

Her sense of excited discomfort persisted. There was a controlled wildness about him beyond her experience.

He must have guessed something of her thoughts, for he laughed and said: "Sheep-farming—cooped up among yon hills? It's a life that would kill me—clipping and dipping and all that dull stuff. Give me the river and sea. Look!" He pointed at the far, watery horizon. "That's a proper world."

They went on chatting. Presently he asked Dinah if she would be down again.

"Thursday week," she said. "To have a glance at the hoggs."

"Right. I'll be here."

Dinah tried to feel annoyed, and failed. In the past few years several dales lads had courted her; steady, decent young chaps. Not one had produced this unquiet and lilting effect.

She went back up the bank and along the ride through the trees. She had left her bike at Ireside, the tiny cottage by the seaward end of the lane that eventually linked up with the dale road. Maybe old Mrs. Santon would know a bit about this wildfowler.

Mrs. Santon was in the garden, clearing up the last of the michaelmas daisies, and being solemnly helped by her granddaughter, Jill, aged five.

"Him?" said the old lady. "Aye, Ben Hartley you're meaning. Came to hut in June, he did. He's an odd 'un."

"Why d'you call him odd?"

"Well. . . ." Mrs. Santon hesitated, finding it difficult to explain. "I nivver know where I am with him, so to speak. He don't belong."

"D'you see him often?"

"In passing. He's got an old motor-bike. How he manages to ride it from that hut to here fairly caps me."

"And he does nothing but wildfowling? He makes his living out of it?"

"Aye, I reckon so."

"He catches fishes," said Jill, deedily filling a toy basket with fallen leaves and twigs.

"A lonesome way to live," said Mrs. Santon, and added: "Stay for a cup of tea."

"Thanks, but I'd better be getting on," said Dinah, thinking of the eleven-mile ride home to Throstle Hill.

She discovered she was wishing that tomorrow might be Thursday week.

At their next meeting the weather was cold and blustery. Ben Hartley sauntered round with her on her tour of inspection. The hoggs were in good fettle, though a few had left sizeable tufts from their fleeces on the brambles.

Westwards the Solway drove white horses.

"It's beautiful," Dinah said, "but cruel."

Ben shook his head. "That's because you don't know it."

"Surely you only go out in that punt when it's quite calm?"

His laugh hurt her. It was almost derisive. The stabbing, impersonal brilliance of his eyes shone brighter. They reminded her of the Solway itself on a glittering day.

He said: "Without a bit of risk it would be as dull as your sheep farming."

She said firmly: "Sheep farming isn't dull."

"Not to you, perhaps." He was watching the white horses and the water curling fiercely through the estuary gutters.

"It's silly to take risks."

"We've all got to die some time. Who wants to rot in the earth? When I go, I'd rather drown and become part of the sea."

"Don't talk like that!"

He was laughing again. "Why shouldn't I?"

Dinah shivered slightly. "I can't understand you."

There was a silence as disturbing as his speech. The look in his eyes baffled her. Admiring farm lads had been kind to her in a clumsy way. There was no clumsiness about him, but no kindness either; at least, not the comfortable kindness of ordinary folk. She told herself that she was a fool. She ought to keep away from him. It would be safer.

But instinct was stronger than common sense. They went on meeting once a fortnight, in rain, or sunlit breeze, or misty stillness, and the wet sand and salty turf and brim-high gutters grew almost as dear to her as her own walled dale fields.

There was no courting in the accepted manner. He never even held her hand. And yet all the time Dinah had the taut, breathless feeling that at any moment he would make love to her in a savage outburst.

Usually she visited the saltings in the early afternoon. There came a day when she set off from Throstle Hill before dawn. She had promised to help out an elderly neighbour who was in bed with 'flu, and the only way she could find the extra time was by inspecting the hoggs at first light.

The air was crisp and frosty, and against the cobalt of the Solway the sands of the estuary had a primrose shimmer. Descending the long bank, Dinah saw a great cloud of mallard settle on the water. Such was the glow of their colouring in the sharp light that she drew a little breath of wonder.

Suddenly, there was the roar of a punt gun. The mallard swept up and off in a scattering bouquet.

At least twenty were left behind, limp on the water or struggling feebly. Sickened by the massacre, Dinah hurried down to the levels, where Ben Hartley was collecting his bag.

"Oh, Ben—it's horrible!"

He tossed the last two birds into a sack.

"What's horrible about it?"

"Killing them wholesale like that."

"T'was all over in a few ticks."

"Yes, but they're so pretty and harmless, and. . . ."

"It's my living," he said sharply. "If it comes to that, do your sheep never go to the butchers?"

It was a hard question to answer. At last she said: "I do wish you'd drop this, and get a proper job. Besides, I hate the idea of you being out in that punt in rough weather."

"Why?"

Her reply was lame. "I'm simply saying these things for your own sake."

"Oh—of course."

She could not be sure if he was laughing at her, or angry, or glad. The young dales chaps were never very expressive, but you knew where you were with them. To get at his mind was like trying to get at the mind of a creature of the wilds.

Suddenly she asked: "Ben, d'you ever feel lonely?"

"With this?" He flicked his hand towards the rising tide, the gulls above weaving and crying.

She said: "I believe you aren't quite human."

"Perhaps not. D'you wish I was?"

"Yes," she whispered.

His lips twisted. "I wonder if you do."

They both stood silent, and Dinah could hear the beating of her heart. Then Ben was speaking again. "I'll not touch you till you're certain of yourself. That's the way of me."

She groped for a spirited answer, and found none.

But later the hard, quiet sense of her breed took charge. Let her stop behaving like a romantic schoolgirl of fifteen and remember she was twenty-four. She would be daft to go on like this. The sooner she gave up seeing him the better. The man she married would have to be human. Ben wasn't.

Spring was on its way, and in a few weeks the hoggs would be gathered, loaded into three-tier trucks, carted back along the dale, and returned to the fells.

All right. After that she would be meeting him no more, and that would be the end of it. That was simple, sound reasoning. Yet somehow it failed to convince her. . . .

With Easter approaching, all the children were collecting Easter eggs and stacking them along the window ledges. Even little Jill Santon had her display in the front room of her grandmother's cottage. Though nobody but Dinah and Ben passed, and that infrequently, the child took as much pride in her show as if it belonged to a village street. To add to the collection, Dinah got her father to buy one at Greyhaven, a big egg wrapped in gold paper decorated with green diamonds.

Jill's rounded eyes were more than enough reward. The egg found its place in the window, set in a bed of shavings. Dinah watched the little girl put it in position, chatted awhile with Mrs. Santon, and went on to the estuary. A minor heat wave had set in, surprisingly warm for the time of year. Some of the hoggs were basking drowsily, and the sea looked genial.

She had made up her mind. While Ben walked around the saltings with her she said: "I shall be coming here only once more. Then the hoggs go back. I'll be coming today fortnight. But, if

ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR

you like, you can see me for a few minutes on the Tuesday—that'll be the twenty-third."

"Aye," Ben said. "When and where?"

"I'm helping at the rummage sale at Lithwaite. I'll be leaving early, to lend Father a hand with the milking. I'll be at Lithwaite road-end at five for a quarter of an hour. . . ."

On the Tuesday she was punctual, reaching the road-end exactly at five. There she dismounted and stood leaning on her bike. A quarter of an hour went by, and there was no sign of him. By twenty past her mood was a blend of empty disappointment and anger. She jumped on the bike and pedalled furiously up the dale, hurt pride steering her thoughts.

She bit her lip and told herself she would keep away from the estuary on Thursday. Her father could look over the hoggs instead. There was no sense in seeing Ben again. Besides, it might drive home to him that no self-respecting dales girl would put up with this sort of treatment.

All Wednesday she stuck to her gnawing decision. But by Thursday morning the estuary was calling to her, and she found an excuse to pacify pride. She had said she would be there today. Very well. She never broke her word.

At one o'clock she started cycling down the dale. Around two she was at Mrs. Santon's with the intention of leaving the bike there.

Something had happened to the window of the front room. There was no display of Easter eggs. Two of the panes had been boarded up and the framework was black and blistered.

WHILE Dinah was regarding the damage, the old lady popped her head out of the door.

"Aye," she said. "It's a nasty mess. My nephew from Lancaster landed up with his car on Tuesday. In the afternoon he took me and Jill for a ride round. You'll remember, it was extra hot. We reckon them shavings round the eggs caught alight, with the sun beating through the glass. Come in and see."

Dinah followed Mrs. Santon. All around the window were the scorch marks of a fire.

Dinah whistled. "And you got back in time?"

"Nay. By a bit of luck Ben Hartley was passing, and saw the flames. He broke in and put them out. I found a note from him on table."

Dinah caught her breath. Then she said: "Poor Jill. All her precious eggs melted away."

"Nay, they weren't. A fair miracle, that was. They were on sideboard yonder, undamaged. How they escaped is a fair capper."

Dinah looked blank. "I don't understand."

"He'd snatched 'em safe from the window ledge somehow and dumped 'em on the sideboard. Mebbe the silver wrapping was a sort of protection—anyways, there they were, and Jill well-nigh jumped for joy. She's got 'em arranged in the back room now." Mrs. Santon led Dinah through. "I reckon it was providence," she concluded solemnly, "for the laal lass would have grieved herself ill if them eggs had been hurt."

Dinah said nothing. Her eyes seemed to be searching for something far distant.

Ten minutes later she was descending to the saltings. A breeze from the west ruffled the spring-green bents, and the light over the Solway was more silver than gold. The air tingled with splendid freedom.

Ben was coming across to her. He said: "It's a bonnie day for our last time." Though his lips were pretending to smile, they had a droop.

"There mightn't have been a last time. When you didn't turn up on Tuesday. . . ."

"I was sorry about that."

"Were you, really and truly?"

"I'd rather have lost my punt," he said, and obviously meant it.

"Was it because of the fire at Ireside?"

He said defensively: "I couldn't have passed by and done nowt."

"Of course you couldn't. Even a man who wasn't quite human wouldn't be so selfish."

"Dinah!" His voice was sharp. "You're laughing. What for?"

"I suppose I'm glad to be alive."

He was watching her with a wary uncertainty. "There's summat else. You're laughing at me."

"I'll tell you why," she said. "You're a fraud."

He blinked. "What are you getting at?"

"Are you expecting me to believe those Easter eggs of Jill's survived the fire? I'm not daft. They'd have melted into blobs. Besides, there was an egg there, supposed to be the one I'd given her, and it wasn't. The green diamonds on it were too small. Come on! Out with it."

Ben shuffled his toe in the muddy sand. "Aye, you're right. Melted blobs they were. Laal lass would have fair broke her heart. So I shoved 'em in my pocket, jumped on my bike, and belted hell for leather to Mallom—it was the nearest spot where I might match up them eggs. I managed to buy twins of 'em all, bar yours. I rode back all out, left 'em on the sideboard, and fairly tore for Lithwaite road-end. But you'd gone."

He was shuffling his toe, and studying it. Half a silent minute crept past.

At last he said: "When you're five, things is treasures. If you lose 'em, and folk buy you some more, it isn't the same. I'll never forget losing a laal wooden gun when I was her age. That's why I made out the eggs weren't hurt. The bairn would have fretted bad." He spoke as if he knew he were offering a lame excuse.

Then he gave a little gasp, because Dinah's arms were around his neck, and she was saying exultantly: "Even if you aren't quite human, Ben, you're a darling." THE END

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Spring

When north winds cease to blow and flowers peep,
And Nature rouses up from winter's sleep,
The housewife shakes away her apathy
To set to work with new-found energy
The havoc of the winter to repair—
With broom, and mop, and soapsuds everywhere.

When trees, grown tired of winter's scenery,
Reclothe their naked limbs in greenery,
Determined men-folk have an urge to rush
And brighten property with paint and brush.
Why, even farmers caught up in this spate
Are known to daub around "Please shut the gate"!

When bob-tail rabbits whisk through ferny fronds,
And little boys find wealth in spawny ponds,
When hikers leave the town like burdened snails
And, just as slowly, follow country trails,
Some people greet the spring with verse and prose,
And quite a few like me plan Easter clothes.

ROSE GRAHAM

Take your

TRALEE

FOG was so thick at Victoria Coach Station that Jack Wheeler, the stationmaster, blundered into the side of a stationary eight-ton vehicle as he groped across the departure bay to answer his telephone. Painfully he continued to the office and picked up the receiver.

As Wheeler listened, the driver of a long-distance coach reported that he had reached London but was unable to go farther. Wheeler studied the driver's position on a map. "Is it possible to do another half-mile?" he asked.

"It might be, at walking speed," replied the driver. "But that won't get the coach to Victoria."

Wheeler felt the bruise he had suffered on his way to the phone. "Never mind about the coach," he said. "It will get your passengers to a tube station. After that it's up to you." The travellers were taken safely to the Underground, and the driver spent the night in his vehicle.

Wheeler, a small, keen-featured man whose peaked cap is chin-high to many passengers, has spent the last ten of his forty-one years looking after the people who travel to and from the largest express-coach terminus in the world. He has acted as overseer of traffic, timekeeper, arbitrator of passengers' quarrels, nursery-maid, vet, and general information bureau.

When a passenger called at Wheeler's office to say that he had lost his false teeth on the station, Wheeler already had them wrapped up and waiting for the man. He was once punched by an aggressive traveller who, through no fault of Wheeler's, had lost his connection, his wallet, and finally his temper. Wheeler accepted it as part of the job. The man later apologized.

Victoria Coach Station was opened in 1932 by a firm called London Coastal Coaches, Ltd., and now acts as the main agency and London terminus for more than thirty provincial coach companies. In its first year, a thousand vehicles departed from the station on its busiest day. In 1956 the record for one day was 1,514. During the same year nine million passengers used the scheduled services, which number as many as 441 on Saturdays in summer and are operated from the station to 1,100 main destinations as far apart as Cardiff, Ostend, Brussels and Naples.

When Wheeler recently objected to a snake charmer boarding a coach for Cheltenham with a basket containing two boa-constrictors, the passenger snatched up one of the reptiles and thrust it into Wheeler's hands. "See, they are quite safe," he said. "They have had a good meal of rabbit and raw eggs." Wheeler eventually allowed the snakes to be stowed in the boot of the coach.

Their owner was lucky. Animals are not often taken on the coaches, but Wheeler did not want the snakes put in the left-luggage department to grow hungry; it already contained two pigeons and a crate of rabbits.

Travellers frequently bring strange luggage to the coach station. A twenty-stone druid bound for a Midsummer Eve's vigil at Stonehenge brought a trumpet more than a yard long, a cornucopia, and wine for the libations. One couple tried to get on a coach with a metal bedstead and an assortment of pots and pans. They explained that they were moving their home.

Wheeler arranged the temporary storage of the

seats for...

• STEEPLE BUMPSTEAD • SMOLENSK

by ALAN LLOYD

Jack Wheeler sees you never miss the bus—whether you're travelling half a mile or half the world away

Wheeler directs a passenger at Victoria Coach Station. Returning a traveller's false teeth or calming tempers are a part of his job too

property at the terminus. During the Chelsea Flower Show some of the coaches leave the station looking like mobile greenhouses.

From time to time Wheeler receives dramatic phone messages from coach drivers heading for Victoria. One said that he thought he had a homicidal escapee from Broadmoor known as "The Mad Parson" on board. "Get the police to stand by," requested the driver. Wheeler had detectives waiting for the coach, but it was a case of mistaken identity. Another driver rang to say that he had picked up Earl Mountbatten, whose car had broken down on the Bournemouth road while he was travelling to an important meeting in London. Wheeler arranged for a taxi to wait near the arrival bay, and ushered Mountbatten to it as soon as he stepped from the coach. When an Admiralty car came to collect him, Wheeler was able to announce: "He left ten minutes ago."

Wheeler's daily contact with thousands of travellers sometimes enables him to assist the police. He was once asked to inform a young woman bound for Oxford that a case of polio had been diagnosed in the family with which she had planned to stay. The police had no idea what time she would leave Victoria, and on that day four companies were each running two or more coaches to Oxford. Wheeler repeatedly broadcast for the woman over the loudspeaker system at the station without success. He found her finally by checking individually with each passenger on the last coach. The woman cancelled her journey when she heard the news.

When a man who was wanted by the police for assault and robbery was believed to have left the station on an Ilfracombe coach, Wheeler estimated the progress of the vehicle; the Hampshire police were informed, and the man was arrested at Hartley Wintney.

During the rail strike of 1955 a queue four-deep almost encircled the two-and-a-half acre site of Victoria Coach Station. So many passengers arrived by car and taxi at one time that Buckingham Palace Road was completely blocked outside the station entrance. Guardsmen marching to take up their duties at the palace had to make a last-minute left wheel and follow Ebury Street as far as Grosvenor Gardens.

Wheeler organized the simultaneous loading of over a hundred coaches and arranged special disembarkation points outside the station for incoming vehicles. During the four days of the strike, Wheeler and his staff of eight inspectors each worked between sixteen and twenty hours a day. Wheeler admits that they could not have stood up to the pressure much longer. But he believes it was worth it, other reasons apart, if it dismissed the idea that coaches were synonymous with carousing trippers and tipplers' outings.

On a busy day, up to 2,500 phone calls an hour are handled by the coach station switchboard. Many of the station's 110 lines are direct to the busiest of its five hundred booking agents in the London area. Coach fares from Victoria range from 4s. 6d. return to 169 guineas—the cost of a twenty-one day tour of Russia.

Wheeler has a high regard for the coach drivers, who, he says, are not easily prevented from bringing their vehicles in on time. During the winter before last a Glasgow coach arrived covered in snow four inches deep. The only part of the vehicle visible was a small triangular section of the windscreen. Although it was daytime, the only light in the coach came from its reading lamps.

Even the exceptional fog of November, 1954, failed to stop many of the coaches from reaching Victoria. One vehicle, due to arrive at 6.30 p.m., was given up for lost by many people when it had not checked in by eight o'clock. Wheeler believed that he knew the driver better. When the rumble of its eighty-horsepower motor announced the coach at ten thirty, he was at the gate to meet it and lead it in with a torch.

Children, who are often put in the charge of coach drivers in the provinces, are not always met when they arrive at Victoria. Wheeler recently entertained a girl of six and her young brother for four hours while the police tried to contact their parents. A letter to say that the children were coming had not arrived, and the parents had gone out.

One young schoolboy regularly spends a couple of hours with Wheeler waiting for coach connections at the beginning and end of his boarding-school terms. Wheeler, who has four children of his own, says: "Kids are easy. They'll happily spend hours watching coaches come and go."

Elderly people are sometimes a problem. One aged woman, blind and deaf, who was helped off a Maidenhead bus, produced a note to the effect that her sister was going to meet her. Wheeler announced over the station radio that a deaf and blind passenger was waiting in his office and that he had no way of communicating with the old woman. Her sister did not turn up, but another passenger who understood a form of touch language did. He was able to tell the woman that she was in the care of the stationmaster and that her relatives were being traced. The woman's sister, who had mistaken the time, eventually arrived almost two hours late.

Passengers frequently tell Wheeler that they have left their tickets behind. "It's amazing how absent-minded many travellers are," he says. A woman who wrote explaining at length how she had lost her ticket, and asking for another, added: "PS. Don't bother. I've just found it."

One middle-aged couple inquired if Wheeler could transfer their bookings to a later coach. They wanted to go home again first because neither of them could remember switching off the television.

THE END

Luggage sometimes presents a problem. One traveller wanted to take two boa-constrictors. A couple tried to get a bedstead on a bus

Cynthia stared around in horror. She was entombed—trapped with the two men who loved her

THE CAVES OF NIGHT

by JOHN CHRISTOPHER

ILLUSTRATED BY HANTS

HENRY swung round at a sound from the other side of the cave. His headlamp shone on Peter climbing the wall, feet struggling for purchase against the rock.

"Get off that!" Henry's voice was low but urgent. "For God's sake, not that wall. . . ."

Henry, a keen cave explorer, was showing his wife, Cynthia, and some of their friends the Frohnberg caves. He knew them well. Entrance to the caves was gained at a point where the underground River Frohn reached the surface.

With Henry and Cynthia Herrin were Heather and Peter Allen, a young honeymoon couple staying at the same inn in the small Austrian town of Frohnberg, and the local "lord of the manor," the Graf Frohnberg. Albrecht, the Graf, was back in Austria after years in a Russian prison camp.

While Henry explored his caves, Albrecht and Cynthia had been spending long days together in the sun. Now they were passionately in love. . . .

It was a whim of Heather's that had brought them to the caves today. Before taking them in, Henry warned them against making any loud noises or sudden movements. Now, leaving the Allens admiring the flower-like mineral formations on one wall of the cave, he had been showing Cynthia and Albrecht the equipment that he had brought. There was a small hole above them through which he hoped to reach another cave.

He broke off in mid-sentence to make that urgent call to Peter. Muffled and echoing, the reply came back: "Right-ho." They saw Peter feeling for a descent, and in the same instant the wall cracked and shattered above his head.

Heather screamed, but her scream was buried in the ripening thunder of stone breaking and crashing against stone as the wall burst inwards. . . .

PART TWO

Journey Into The Earth

THEY found Heather lifting Peter up. He had not been buried by the rock, but had been thrown down near the edge of the water. She looked up incredulously into the light of Henry's lamp.

"He's all right!"

Peter himself said: "I guess I pulled the wrong string. Quite a surprise packet. I'm afraid I didn't get your flower, honeybunch."

Henry said: "I'm glad you're all right, Peter." His voice was coldly incisive. "But that was a damn stupid thing to do."

"You didn't tell him not to," Heather protested.

"I hardly thought I needed. I told you all several times that the tunnel was unsafe."

Peter said: "Quite right. I ought to have known better."

"Anyway," Heather said, "nothing serious has happened. Everything's all right."

"Is it?"

The light from Henry's headlamp covered the place where the mouth of the tunnel had been. The collapsed wall lay in a heap of shattered rock against which the river waters broke in angry black foam. Here and there a patch of gypsum blossom winked up in the light.

Albrecht asked quietly: "How long?"

"It's impossible to say exactly," Henry said. "I think we can count the time we have left in hours."

"How long till what?" Heather asked.

Peter said, in a dry voice: "The river's blocked by the fall. You can see that the level's rising already. It will spread out over the floor of this cave. Gradually it will fill it. That's what they're talking about, darling."

Heather stared in awakening horror at the water. "You mean—we'll drown?"

Peter said desperately: "If we really had a go at the tunnel . . . even if we didn't clear a way through for ourselves, we might make a channel for the river."

"I don't think our chances would be very good," Henry said, almost absently. "There's really only one thing we can do."

Albrecht said: "Your hole? But that means going farther into the earth, does it not? If we cannot find a way out from here, how can we do so from more deeply inside the hill?"

"The current of air," Henry said, "means that somewhere there is another link-up with the outside world. God knows how far or inaccessible, but it offers a chance. It might lead us to the Liedl caves."

"But Liedl is many kilometres from Frohnberg."

"By road—not so far if you go through the hills."

"Well," Heather said, "what are we waiting for? If it's the only thing to do, we might as well do it."

Henry said sharply: "One thing we're waiting for is to find that torch you dropped." He swung his head from side to side, scanning the cave floor with the light. "You two can hunt for it. I've got a spare torch over the other side that you can use. But from now on we're practising absolute economy. Turn your pockets out for anything that might be useful."

They all responded to the command in his voice. Cynthia, rummaging in the pockets of her slacks, reflected that this was a Henry she had never known before.

She said: "Handkerchief and compact. Nothing else."

Albrecht produced a silver cigarette case. "Thirteen cigarettes. A lighter. And some money."

"Packet of ten," Peter said. "And a box of matches."

"Good," Henry said. "Heather?"

"One bar of chocolate," she said cheerfully. "Nothing else."

"Right," Henry said. "I'll get you the other torch, and you can look for the one you lost. Albrecht, you can lend me a hand on widening the hole."

They all trailed after him to the other side of the cave and then Heather and Peter went back with the torch. The other three remained.

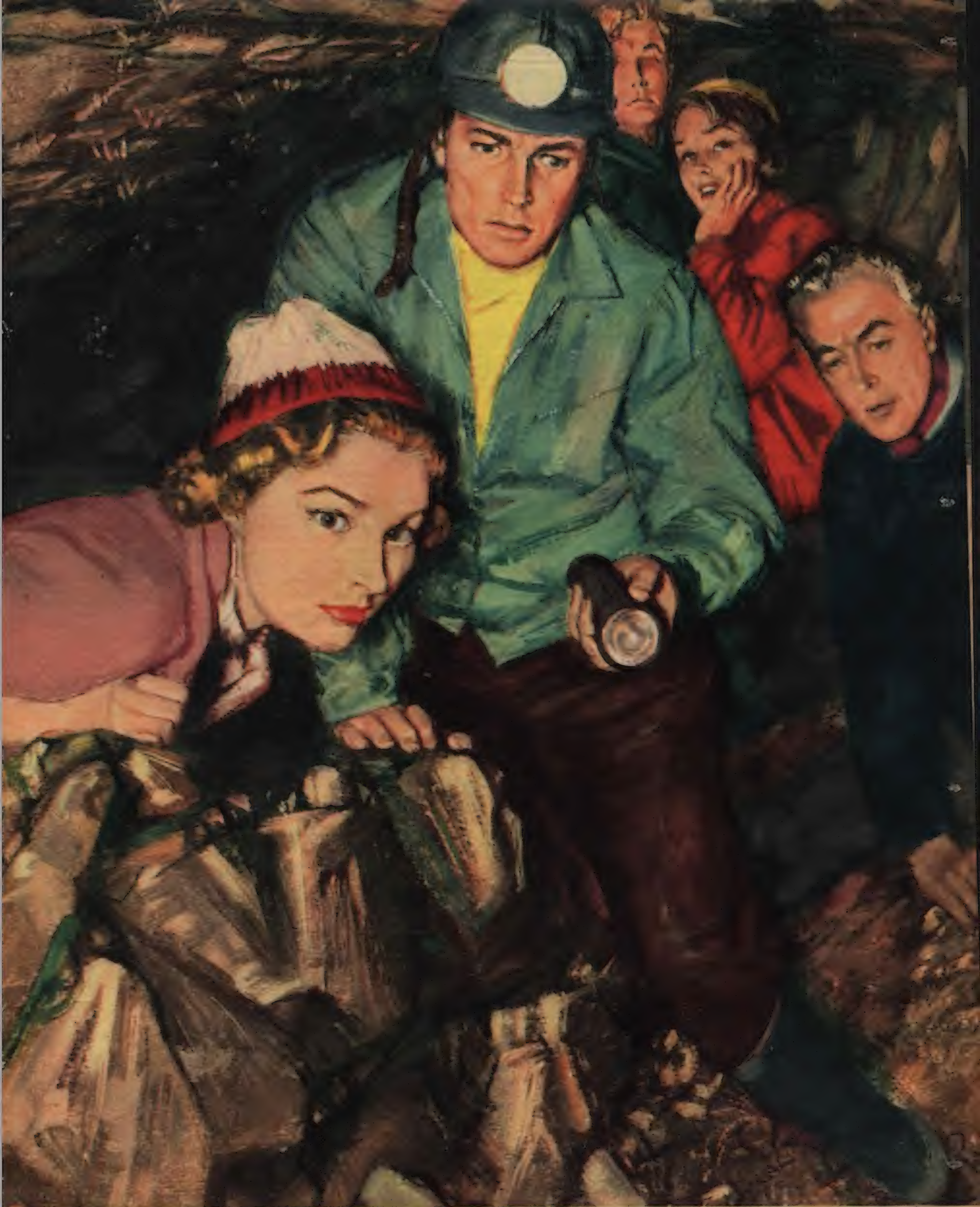
"There seems a lot of stuff here," Cynthia said.

"There isn't a tenth of what I would like," Henry said gloomily. "Let's have a look. Light first. How's the battery in that torch of yours, Albrecht—providing they find it?"

"It is quite new. I am not sure how long they last."

"Say three hours. I've got spare batteries, but they will only

The light from



enry's headlamp covered the place where the mouth of the tunnel had been. "I think we can count the time we have left in hours," Henry said

Football's prince of

Danny Blanchflower bewitches with his feet and his tongue. He's a gentleman player who knows his place in the game—at the top

NORTHERN IRELAND led England 1-0 in the international soccer match at Wembley Stadium last November. Danny Blanchflower and Billy Wright, the respective captains, waited at the doors of their dressing-rooms for the signal to lead out their teams for the second half.

Wright, the English captain, grinned across the tunnel at Blanchflower. "What's the matter, afraid to come out?" he asked.

"We *are* a bit scared," Blanchflower admitted. "We're winning at last."

Inspired by Blanchflower's leadership, Northern Ireland went on to win the match 3-2, their first victory over England for thirty years. Blanchflower's remark at the interval to Wright was unusually brief for a man with a reputation among soccer players for possessing the gift of the gab. But he had run his vocabulary dry pepping up his side with words.

A slightly built, wiry Ulsterman of thirty-two, Blanchflower, who plays right-half for Tottenham Hotspur and Northern Ireland, practises such a smooth blarney brand of soccer that even English experts who have a poor regard for Irish football today rate him among the all-time stars. His bluntness and loquacity have made him an enigma to many managers and directors in British football.

IN 1951, when Aston Villa were anxious to buy him from Barnsley, Joe Richards, the Barnsley chairman who is also president of the Football League, took Blanchflower to Derby in his car to complete the deal. After telling Blanchflower to lunch with his chauffeur, Richards dined with the Aston Villa representatives and sold Blanchflower for £15,000.

Hundreds of Irishmen mobbed Blanchflower and his men after they had defeated England at Wembley last year

"I'm no snob," says Blanchflower, "but eating with the chauffeur while I was being auctioned for a fortune made me realize what many officials believe is the player's place in the game."

While with Barnsley, Blanchflower travelled to Wrexham to play for Northern Ireland against Wales. Seeing Arthur Rowe, then manager of Tottenham Hotspur, standing outside the ground, Blanchflower, who has always admired Rowe, introduced himself with the abrupt but disarming remark that Spurs' type of intelligent football could only have been built up by great encouragement from the manager.

His frankness has not always been so flattering. In 1954, when he was on Aston Villa's transfer list, George Noakes, the chief scout of Wolverhampton Wanderers, told Blanchflower that Stan Cullis, the Wolves manager, would like him in his team. Blanchflower was friendly with Cullis and admired the results he obtained, but he believed that his own tactical ideas were completely opposed to those of Cullis. "If I came to Molineux, I'd never be out of Cullis's office arguing with him," he told Noakes.

At Christmas a London press agency asked Blanchflower to pose for a seasonal picture carrying a turkey into his house at Southgate. Blanchflower, who has a strong sense of personal dignity, refused. "Your photographer can come and take a picture of my wife, Bett, carrying in the turkey or putting it in the oven," he said. "She's the cook here, not me."

Arthur Rowe believes that Blanchflower personifies pure football and "is in the same class as that of Stanley Matthews, Tommy Lawton, Raich Carter and Dixie Dean." Under Blanchflower's captaincy and Peter Doherty's management, Northern Ireland, who finished at the bottom of last year's home international tournament table, now lead it. Northern Ireland defeated the strong Italian side at Windsor Park, Belfast, in January, to reach the World Cup finals, and may surprise the rest of the world in Sweden in June.

Blanchflower's attacking style of half-back play provokes irritation among some soccer experts, enthusiasm in others. "It's an expression of his tremendous ego, which is just what a great captain needs," says Rowe. "In nine matches out of ten Blanchflower has the ball more than any two other players on the field."

A voluble talker and a keen tactician, Blanchflower believes in surprise tactics. In Belfast last year Northern Ireland were leading Portugal by 2-0 when they were awarded a penalty. Blanchflower knelt near the penalty spot, pretending to tie his bootlace, and whispered to Jimmy McIlroy to pass to him. Receiving the ball, Blanchflower dribbled it forward and slipped it past the goalkeeper for a perfectly legal goal.

The referee ordered the penalty to be retaken on other technical grounds. This time McIlroy scored directly from the spot. "We stood to gain either way by the stratagem," Blanchflower argues. "The Portuguese goalkeeper didn't know what was going on and was shaken for the rest of the match."

BLANCHFLOWER never loses an opportunity of discussing tactics. "A few years ago when he visited me in Burnley," says McIlroy, "he nearly drove my landlady crazy by demonstrating soccer moves with the aid of her best china on the tea table."

Blanchflower's independent ideas cost him the captaincy of Spurs in 1956. Two years earlier, in an attempt to rebuild his veteran team, Arthur Rowe took the Irishman from Aston Villa to Tottenham as a key player who would eventually become captain.

In April, 1956, when Blanchflower

Continued from page 19

fit my headlamp and the other torch. Two spare bulbs. Then there's the acetylene lamp"—he nodded his head towards it—"two and a half hours—and enough carbide to recharge half a dozen times, making about seventeen hours. Altogether about forty-eight hours of light. In addition, *Gott sei Dank*, half a dozen candles, three boxes of matches and Albrecht's lighter."

"But almost no food," Albrecht said.

"I wouldn't trade a solitary match for a loaf of bread," Henry said. "It's light that we've got to have."

Albrecht said: "It may be that there is nothing on the other side of the wall—nothing that can offer us a way."

"Then we're finished. Now, gear. Two hundred-foot lengths of half-inch nylon rope, two thirty-foot electron ladders, a dozen T-section pitons and a dozen angle irons, a chisel and a short hammer. Lastly, one inflatable R.A.F.-type rubber dinghy."

"That won't hold five of us," Cynthia observed.

"No, but if we have to use it, we can run a ferry service."

"Will there be lakes?"

"I think there might be one, at least, from the speed with which the level of the Frohn rises at times," Henry said. "Here's the hammer and chisel, Albrecht. Will you get up there and start opening out the hole?"

Henry lighted Albrecht's way up the rubble slope. There was the clang of steel on stone, and he let his head drop again as he looked at the equipment in front of them.

Cynthia said quietly: "Henry, what chance have we?"

"Very good, provided we keep our heads."

"You shouldn't lie to me."

He lifted his head to look at her; the light from his lamp dazzled her eyes. He said slowly: "No, we shouldn't lie to each other."

"Well?"

"What I said about the current of air was quite true. Somehow that hole up there must lead to the outside world. The only trouble is that a current of air can go where men and women can't—up a smooth vertical chimney, or over an underground river with the rock an inch or two from the water all the way. We just don't know what it's going to be like."

Cynthia did not speak for a moment or two. Then she said: "If there hadn't been this hole in the wall, it would have been over quicker, wouldn't it? We may be saving ourselves for something worse."

Henry said: "I don't think there could be anything worse than being drowned here by slowly rising water."

She wanted to touch him, to turn for comfort to his arms, but she could not bring herself to the gesture. She tried desperately to love Henry as she had always loved him, spurring herself on with the fear of death, but it was no good.

Heather's voice echoed through the cave. "Got it!" There was a whispered protest from Peter, and then the two of them advanced towards Henry, each carrying a torch. Heather said happily: "Look, it's quite all right—not even scratched." She flashed the torch up and around the cave. Henry reached out and took it from her hand.

"Can't I keep it?" she asked.

"This is for Albrecht," Henry said. "Peter, you can keep the one you've got. What's the river level like?"

"It's up over the top."

"I expected that." He called up to Albrecht: "How are you getting on up there?"

"I have made it bigger, but now the stone breaks less easily."

"I'll come up and lend a hand with a couple of irons." Henry began to clamber up the slope towards Albrecht.

Heather said: "Can we have a light on down here?"

Henry turned back towards them, enveloping them with light. "Peter can use the torch, but as little as possible. You might as well learn to handle things in the dark."

"Damn it," Heather said. "It's all right for you—you've got a permanent searchlight in front of you."

"So I have."

Cynthia knew all the intonations of Henry's voice; and now, for the first time since the rock fall, there was strain in it. "If somebody else would like the job of trying to get us out of this, he can have the cap and headlamp. Or she."

He turned back towards Albrecht, and they heard the two of them murmuring together.

"Squashed," Heather said. "I suppose he's right. What a masterful husband you've got, Cyn."

Peter said gloomily: "What a mess I've landed us all in."

"It wasn't your fault."

Overhead, the chipping steadily continued.

Peter shone the torch backwards and they saw the black sheet of water, now more than half-way across the cave floor. He called to Henry: "The water's coming up."

His voice was urgent; too obviously so. Henry called: "Don't worry. We're nearly through. But you can get the gear up on the slope above the water level. There's no point in getting it wet unnecessarily."

Peter, flashing the torch from time to time, started shifting the equipment up on to the rubble. The chipping above them stopped. They heard Henry talking to Albrecht. "I think you're a little slimmer than I am. See if you can get through now. You might be able to clear it a bit more from the other side."

There was a scuffling noise. "Are

blarney

by JOHN BALLANTINE

A family man, Blanchflower plays golf in the garden with his son Richard and daughter Gail. He is a teetotal non-smoker

was captain, Spurs were losing 1-3 to West Ham United in the sixth round of the F.A. Cup. Blanchflower moved Maurice Norman, a full-back with an attacking reputation, up into the forward line midway through the second half. Norman had a hand in two late goals which earned a draw. Spurs won the replay

TWENTY minutes from the end of the Cup semi-final against Manchester City at Villa Park, Spurs were losing by the only goal of the match. Again Blanchflower moved Norman into attack, and put the inside-forward, Johnny Brooks, back in defence. It made no difference. Spurs lost. Blanchflower was severely criticized by the manager, Jimmy Anderson, and ceased to be captain

"Blanchflower is still the real leader of Spurs anyway," says a Tottenham supporter. "His influence can be seen in every game"

Off the field Blanchflower is popular with his colleagues for his sense of fun, his command of language and his common sense in giving practical advice. In 1947, when Glentoran officials were anxious to sign his young brother, Jackie, Blanchflower advised him to keep clear of agreements. Jackie, who joined Manchester United when he was sixteen and was a survivor of the Munich air disaster in February, now says. "I'll always be grateful to Danny for safeguarding my future."

Blanchflower, a family man with two children, Richard, aged six, and Gail, aged two, does not drink or smoke, and his tidy habits on tour always impress McIlroy, his friend and room-mate. "Danny lays out his belongings scrupulously as soon as he gets into an hotel, brushing his suits and carefully rolling up his ties," he says.

While travelling to matches by train Blanchflower prefers reading to talking or playing cards. On one rail journey with the Northern Ireland team he handed Doherty a book on philosophy, pointed to a passage, and asked for an opinion on it. In the Spurs' motor-coach he often takes the driver's microphone and entertains his colleagues by impersonating a big fight commentator, by singing a music hall song, or by performing a cross-talk comedy act with Alf Stokes, another player

A friend collects what he calls Blanchflowerisms in the way other men collect jokes and quotes them to his friends Once Blanchflower described the publicity given to a commercial product he was advertising as "like Diana Dors tip-toeing into the West End in front of a brass band"

Blanchflower has no intention of becoming a football manager when his playing days are over He intends to write on sport or make a career in television "He is the most versatile TV performer of all soccer players," says Paul Fox, an editor of the B.B.C.'s *Sportsview*. "He is a fluent speaker with a gift for a witty and illuminating phrase. The only difficulty is to get him to stop."

Robert Dennis Blanchflower was born in Belfast on February 10, 1926. His mother played inside right for a ladies football club in Belfast Sports writers have made much of the idea that she was Danny's first coach

"In fact," says Blanchflower, "I don't remember her teaching me at all But when Jackie and I got to kicking and heading a rubber ball around the sitting-room, Mother joined in until we knocked something off the mantelpiece Then Father came from behind his newspaper, grabbed the ball and sat on it"

JACKIE recalls how, with newspaper bags over their shoulders, they would race through the deserted Belfast streets at 6 a.m., dribbling and passing a tennis ball

Danny bought a set of second-hand jerseys for 10s. in 1940 and started a team called Bloomfield United "A month later several bigger and older players joined the club and I lost my place at inside-left," he says.

He became an apprentice electrician and signed as an amateur player with Glentoran before volunteering for the R.A.F in 1944. He was sent to St. Andrew's University, Scotland, for nine months' training as an electrical engineer. He gave up soccer but tried his hand at golf on the famous Old Course. He retired after taking ten shots each for the first two holes.

Now Blanchflower plays golf to a handicap of ten. In the Bowmaker Tournament at the Royal Berkshire club last June, he partnered Stephen Potter, the humorist, and Frank Jowle, the golf professional at Edgbaston.

In 1945, while waiting for a ship to take him to Canada on a navigator's course, Blanchflower was sent to Newark to shovel coke. When the station warrant officer called for volunteer truck drivers, Blanchflower stepped forward, although he had never handled a lorry in his life He took lessons from a friend and, by some keen bluffing later that day, satisfied the scrutiny of a motor transport corporal. A few hours later, driving his first lorry, he knocked the warrant officer off his bicycle at a dangerous corner

While he was in Canada the war ended and Blanchflower was sent home Glentoran signed him as a professional for a lump sum of £50 and £3 a match. Until his demobilization they arranged for him to turn out as a "guest player" with Swindon Town.

In 1947 he played for the Irish League against the English League at Goodison Park in the first representative game after the . The Irishmen were beaten 2-4 after a hard match

In April, 1949, two months after Manchester United signed his brother, Jackie, Blanchflower was transferred to Barnsley Two years later, he fell out with the manager, Angus Seed, about lack of ball practice

"There was an idea then that if players were starved of the ball all week they would fight for it like tigers on Saturdays. I went into Mr Seed's office and told him I wanted either a ball or a transfer. I got a ball," he says.

Blanchflower joined Aston Villa in 1951 In 1954 he was put on the transfer list. Spurs sent their manager, Arthur Rowe, to Villa Park and, after a fifteen-minute conversation in the players' rest room, Blanchflower agreed to go to Tottenham

HIS diplomacy and quick thinking, which are features of his captaincy, saved the riot at Windsor Park Belfast after the Northern Ireland *v.* Italy "friendly" match on December 4, from turning into a tragedy

At the final whistle hundreds of spectators, incensed at the rough play, ran on to the field and fights broke out with Italian players. Blanchflower shouted to his men to escort an Italian each from the field. He himself shouted "stop" to two opponents who were brawling with spectators and, after prevailing upon the crowd to leave them alone, saw the Italians to their dressing-room.

Afterwards Dr. Ottorino Barassi, president of the Italian Football Federation, said of Blanchflower. "He is a man of many parts, and a gentleman."

THE END

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you through?" Henry asked. "What's it like?"

They could not make out Albrecht's answer. Henry said: "Right. You chip the bottom and I'll carry on at this side."

"What is it like?" Cynthia called.

"There's a floor only a couple of feet down. So far, so good. It shouldn't be long before we can all get through now"

His voice held relief Heather said "What is so good about that?"

"The hole's about twenty feet high in this cave—it could have been a hundred feet above the floor level in the next," Peter explained

"We should have had to go down on a rope. It wouldn't have been easy, and anyway we want to go up, not down"

The chipping stopped again after a few minutes. Henry slithered down the rubble slope "All right," he said "Pick up your things. I'll carry Albrecht's for the present."

"Are we going to be roped?" Cynthia asked

"Not unless we have to be. It cuts down mobility for people who aren't used to a life line Come on then Everything loaded? You and Heather first. Peter."

While they were scrambling up towards the hole, Henry turned his headlamp, for the last time. In the cave they were abandoning, the water-level was very close to where they stood Its steady, almost perceptible rise, was frightening. Cynthia thought of what it would be like in a few hours, with the cave flooded to more than three times a man's height, and the water still steadily pouring in, and then out again through the hole in the wall

She said: "It will follow us, won't it? The water."

"It may not," Henry said. "I hope we can get well above this level."

The hole was quite small, but the rock wall which it pierced was not thick. Albrecht helped Cynthia down. There was a sudden glow from the cave they had left, and then Henry passed the acetylene lamp through. Its softer, more diffuse light lit up the place in which they now were

It was a gallery, about ten feet high and four or five feet wide. The walls had been scoured by water, and the floor was runnelled and broken.

There was an upward slope to it, not steep but unmistakable, from left to right

Henry joined them. "It could be a lot worse," he observed.

"We're travelling up, I take it?" Peter said

"Wherever we can It may not always be possible But this is a good start, and the current of air is from above."

He put out the lamp and they started off About thirty yards on, the gallery deviated to the left, narrowed, and began to dip instead of rise. Cynthia heard Peter say "Do you think we ought to turn back and try the other way?"

Henry's voice came back hollowly: "Once you decide on a route, it's best to follow it through until it proves to be quite impossible. The whole picture may change at any minute."

"The sooner this changes," Heather said, "the better. I don't like tight squeezes"

Their progress became slower, not only owing to the narrowing of the gallery, but by reason of the increasingly broken nature of the floor Cynthia put her hands out to touch the enclosing rock; it was only a matter of inches from her shoulders on either side.

Albrecht stood close behind her She leaned backwards, and he put his hands under her elbows, supporting her. No words passed between them. She shivered

"Are you cold?"

She whispered "No. Just an awful feeling"

"What about?"

"Silly, I suppose. That all this might be a punishment. For. . . ."

She did not finish Albrecht said quietly: "And Henry, too — and Heather and Peter?"

They moved on. Soon her shoulders were brushing against the walls; the others must already be having to squeeze their way through. The ceiling had dropped as well.

Then Henry called back. "It's all right. We're through"

They squeezed their way along the last few yards. The gallery opened out into another chamber. It was low-roofed, but very wide; the light did not reach the far side.

"We're still underground," Heather said disappointedly. "I thought you meant through to the outside."

"We're out of that damned tunnel, at least," Peter said.

Henry peered out into the darkness "This is the biggest room we've found in these caves so far. The thing to do now is explore it. Our best plan is to track round the sides, making a note of all the openings and galleries leading off I'll go to the right, and Albrecht can go to the left. The rest of you can have a rest here."

The two women sat on either side of Peter, their backs against the wall of the cave. Darkness closed over them again; there was only the distant flicker of the torches as the two men made their way in opposite directions round the cave.

They were gone about ten minutes. When they returned, Peter said: "Do we move now?"

Henry said. "Yes. Pass the acetylene lamp, and I'll light it again."

"You're back more quickly than I expected," Peter said. "I thought you

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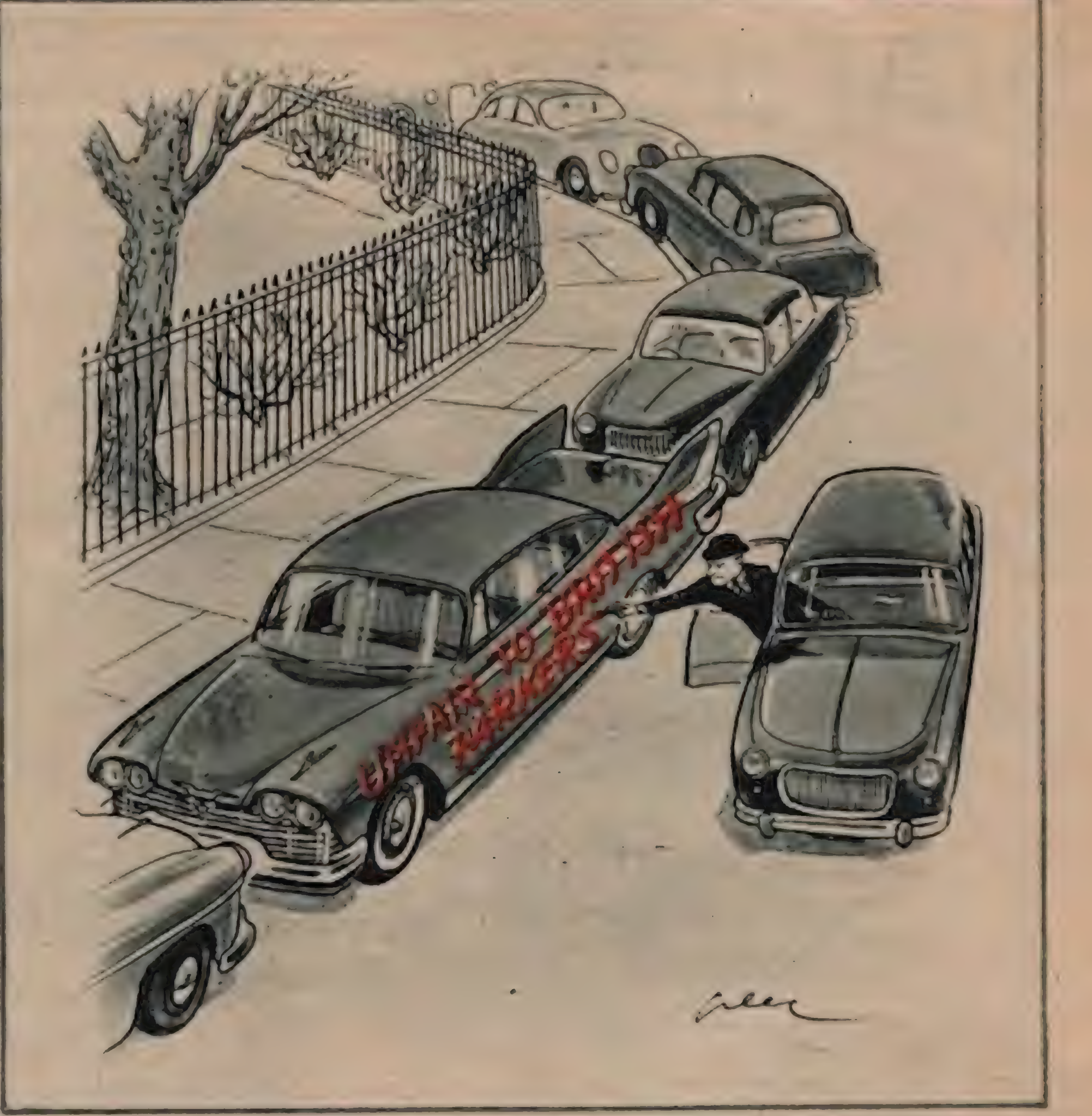

would want to recce the tunnels before deciding on one."

The match flared, and the lamp gave out its brilliance, making them blink and rub their eyes.

"It was easier than we thought," Henry said. His face was grimly ironic. "There aren't any tunnels. Apart from the one we've just left."

"My God!" Heather exclaimed. "We aren't going back along that passage, are we?"

Henry said without expression: "You're going to do as I tell you. If I decide we have to go back down there, then you're coming with us. All the same, I hope it won't be necessary. There aren't any tunnels, but on the side I covered there's a sloping crack in the wall. I think it's been a water-course at some time. I couldn't do much because I didn't have the irons with me."

"We might be able to climb it?" Peter asked.

"We're going to try."

The crack began two or three feet up from the floor, and ran away at an angle of about forty-five degrees, becoming wider and deeper until it was lost in the shadows. Henry hammered a piton into the rock face while Albrecht held the lamp.

"I think that one will do. Pass me another iron, Peter."

He tucked several irons in his belt and made his way slowly upwards. When he was fifteen or twenty feet above the others, he switched on his helmet-light, and its beam showed them the cave roof; it was perhaps six feet above him.

In a flat voice Peter said: "He must have been wrong about it being a water-course."

Heather said: "You mean we'll have to go down again, after all. Oh, darling, please no!"

"He still climbs," Albrecht said, looking up the rock face.

They watched Henry drive in yet another iron ahead of him. He moved up, and rested against it. Then, slowly and carefully, he began to make his way back down towards them. He dropped off the last iron and spoke to Albrecht: "Can I have one of the ladders?"

Peter asked incredulously: "You mean there's a way up there?"

Henry said: "It looks dead from here, but there's a lip just above the last iron. Once I've got a ladder anchored up there, you'll find it's easy enough."

He tied the coil of ladder on his back and started up again. The others had nothing to do but watch his slow, painstaking climb.

Peter said: "It's wrong that Henry should have all the hard graft."

"He is the only one of us," Albrecht said, "who has experience in these things. There is no choice. Without him we are lost."

Peter did not reply. There was a cry from above them. "Ladder coming!" A moment later the frail-looking contraption clattered down the rock face towards them.

Peter said: "I think this might well be a case of gentlemen first." He swung himself cautiously on to the ladder. "You can bring up the rear, Albrecht, in case they want a leg up."

Cynthia watched Peter's steady climb, followed by that of a much less steady and more voluble Heather. She understood the reason both for the unsteadiness and the volubility when it was her turn to go. With the slightest movement she made, the ladder swayed from side to side, and her toes and knuckles were banged against the rock face.

Henry had belayed the top of the ladder on a couple of irons driven into the ground, and was watching them to make sure they held firm. As Cynthia reached the top, he said: "I'm going down now to see about getting the rest of the gear up. Watch these irons, Peter."

He disappeared down the ladder. Heather said: "I wonder what it's like up here?"

Peter flashed his torch into the surrounding blackness. They had a glimpse of a vaulting chamber, stretching away all round them, of great gleaming pillars and a flash of crystal fire.

Heather gasped. "But it can't be! We've climbed through a crack in the roof of that other cave. We can't possibly be in another one ten times as big."

"The whole damned mountain must be hollow," Peter said. . . .

When everything was up at the new level, Henry lit the acetylene lamp again and they were able to see their surroundings more clearly.

The walls of the cave were considerably encrusted with stalactite formations, ranging from shining narrow spears to bulbous pillars growing out of the rock face. Here and there patches of crystal picked up the light and threw it back more brightly.

They pressed on, and quickly came to a new obstacle—a hill of rubble occupying the full width of the cave.

Albrecht said: "It appears to rise up to the roof."

"It's not likely that it will," Henry

said. "Anyway, we have to climb it to see."

"I'm dreadfully hungry," Heather complained.

"It's not time for supper yet."

The climb proved arduous and exhausting; the hill was made up very largely of loose stones, interspersed with awkwardly shaped boulders. And the crest, when they reached it, did not show them a simple descent to an ordinary cave floor, but a dip followed by another rise beyond. They had to slither down into the hollow and then climb again; only to find the pattern repeated.

They were still on the rubble when the acetylene lamp flickered and went out. Henry said: "It's after nine o'clock. Time to rest for the night."

Peter said, with a wan attempt at humour: "Don't you feel we ought to have the mattress changed? It's got rocks in it."

"You do not think we should go on a little?" Albrecht asked.

Henry had switched his headlamp on again. The light rested on Albrecht's face, outlining with brutal harshness the marks of his premature ageing.

"The rest of you stop here," Henry said. "I'll recce on a bit. I'd like to get off this stuff if it's possible."

HE left them, without waiting for their assent, and it seemed a long time before they heard him returning. Then the light danced nearer and he said: "If you can manage a bit farther—we're nearly at the end of the rubble. A couple of hundred yards, that's all."

They picked themselves up and continued.

They were on a downward slope now, and Heather, losing her footing, slithered down the last few feet. Peter's light flashed forward to cover her. It revealed her sprawling on a frozen sea.

"Ice!" he exclaimed. "Is it a glacier?"

Henry switched on his own headlamp. "A stalagmite floor." He turned his head. "Look at the walls."

The walls were encrusted with crystals, multi-coloured and dazzling, flowers and swords and cobwebs, all jewelled. It was a display which paled the memory of everything they had seen before.

Henry said: "I think this is a good place to have supper and lie up for the night. Do you think you could divide up, Cyn?"

Albrecht was lighting the acetylene lamp. The cave here was some thirty feet across. The whole shimmering palace of crystal stretched away to a point, only dimly visible, where the cave appeared to split into two separate branches.

Cynthia took the food haversack and opened it. She asked Henry: "How much can we eat?"

"If we open one of the tins of beef, we can have half now and the other half before we set off again."

"Half—among five of us?"

"And one biscuit each, I think. We can eat the bar of chocolate as well."

Cynthia borrowed a knife from Albrecht to make the scrupulous division that was necessary. She divided the meat first, and handed the tiny mounds round, each bare mouthful resting on a biscuit. Then she tackled the chocolate bar. Henry rummaged in the haversack and said: "One cigarette each, I think. I don't need to tell you to keep the stubs, I imagine."

"One whole cigarette!" Heather marvelled.

Henry doused the lamp, and Albrecht offered round his lighter. Its small yellow flame spired against the blackness that once more pressed close about them.

Heather said: "I suppose people will be searching for us by now. We couldn't make some sort of signal to them, I suppose? Knock on the walls, or something?"

Henry said: "There's absolutely no hope of our being rescued from outside. We must all realize that. Everything depends on our own efforts—and just now we need to get some sleep."

"On a marble slab?" Heather asked. "I don't think I've got the right anatomy for it."

Peter said: "On the contrary, I should think you're better equipped than the rest of us—than Henry, Albrecht and me, at any rate."

"We'll be able to rest, at least," Henry said. "If we are tired enough, we'll sleep as well."

Cynthia lay down on the smooth expanse of stalagmite, with Heather on one side of her and Henry on the other. After a while Henry's voice whispered behind her ear: "Cyn."

"Yes?"

"Don't be afraid. We're going to be all right. I've got a feeling about it."

She made no answer.

"Tomorrow night we'll be back in bed at the inn."

She still did not reply, and Henry did not say anything else. Soon she felt the small involuntary jerk of his leg which was the sign that he had fallen asleep, and after a time her own consciousness began to fade. . . .

Cynthia was awakened by Heather shifting uneasily against her, and shortly afterwards Peter coughed. Heather whispered something to him, and he whispered back. She moved her own legs, which were cramped, and felt Henry yield behind her. She turned her head, and said quietly: "What time is it?"

"Half-past three."

Heather said, with relief: "You're awake as well, then."

Henry said: "I think we're all awake. I take it nobody wants to lie on in bed?"

Heather sat up. She said: "I never knew I had so many muscles. I feel absolutely black and blue."

She sounded, however, quite cheerful about it. There was a distinct note of cheerfulness also in Henry's voice when he replied: "A brisk walk will make all the difference." He twisted round to reach his helmet and switched on the light.

Cynthia said, as Albrecht lit the acetylene lamp: "What do we have for breakfast—the same as we had for supper?"

Henry said: "Yes. We can't risk anything."

It did not take them long to complete the meal. Then they set off again. Cynthia found herself beside Albrecht, and put her hand out to his. Their fingers pressed together.

As they approached the point where the cave forked, Albrecht asked Henry: "Which way? To right, or left?"

"I don't think it matters."

"Why not?" Peter began. "Oh, I see."

They could all see. The fork did not represent any true division; it was simply a rock pillar dividing the cave temporarily into two halves. Several yards farther on, the two courses re-joined.

As they advanced along the right-hand course the ground began to dip. More ominously, the cave itself narrowed and the jagged roof sagged down. Then all at once, around a bend, it opened out again, and the stalagmite floor abruptly ended. It gave way to a level blackness that appeared to have no limits.

Henry stopped. "After all this time," he said, "a lake at last."

"A lake?" Heather said. "That's not water!"

"Try and walk on it," Henry suggested. He unstrapped the rubber boat from his back, and began to unfold it. "At least I haven't carried this for nothing."

Peter said: "Do you think there would be any fish in a stretch of water like this?"

"Sometimes, I think," Albrecht said. "But they are white, and blind. They do not need either colour or eyes."

"Anyway," Heather said, "we've got nothing to cook them with if we caught any."

"I have an idea," Peter said, "that

AUTHORSHIP—I

TO write good prose is an affair of good manners.

Somerset Maugham

'So many people are saying Martini!'

'And that's a fact! Come on in, Sir. Won't keep you a moment. Only got to serve about five hundred people first . . . Just like I was telling you the other day, Sir—it's Martini, Martini all the week. Looks as though everybody's got the same good idea! Come on in and join the queue.'

sweet or dry

MARTINI

MARTINI
MARTINI

I'm just about hungry enough to eat them raw. But I don't see how one would go about catching them. When I was in Ireland once I went salmon fishing with lanterns—you know, spearing them as they came up to the light. It wouldn't work if they're blind, though, would it?"

Henry was blowing up the boat. He paused, gasping. "You seem to have a lot of breath, Peter. You take over."

"Darling," Heather said, "I did tell you you talked too much."

"If that's what we're going on," Peter said, "this is a woman's job—yours, my sweetie."

Heather backed away. "Oh, no!"

Peter grabbed at her, and they wrestled. She abandoned resistance suddenly, and the pair of them came crashing to the ground. They landed almost on top of Henry, who was still crouching over the boat.

"The next time you two do something like that, you can do the rest of the journey on your own," Henry said. His voice was bitter and unpleasant.

Peter said: "Sorry, Henry."

Henry stared at him angrily. "That's very nice. Are you apologizing for anything in particular, or just to make the party go?"

"He's apologizing," Heather said, "so as not to upset you. I think he's overdoing it."

Henry waited for a time. Then he said: "We're down here because you two played the fool. Just now you endangered us for a second time. There'd better not be a third."

Heather said contemptuously· "I suppose we might have fallen on you and broken your neck—is that what you call endangering people?"

Henry held up the half-inflated boat. "I was talking about this. It's made of rubber, and not very thick rubber, either. I haven't got a repair kit. And if it's pressed against a sharp edge of rock it can be gashed in an instant."

Peter said: "We're sorry, Henry. We will be careful from now on."

There was no further comment from anybody. Peter and Heather squatted down together, and Peter went on with the inflation of the rubber boat. Henry began to rummage in the haversack. He said: "You'll come with me, Albrecht. We'd better have a few candles and a waterproofed box of matches with us, to be on the safe side."

"Are we to take the acetylene lamp, as well?" Albrecht inquired.

"Yes. And we'd better have a spare charge."

Cynthia asked: "How long do you think you will be gone?"

Henry shrugged. "We'd better fix an end limit. Make it six hours. We should be back in four at the outside—we'll turn back after two hours whatever the results. But we'd better allow the extra couple of hours in case we run into difficulties." He took the now inflated dinghy and carried it over to the water's edge. "Ready when you are, Albrecht. Have you got the paddles?"

Albrecht gave him the solid rubber paddles, and then made the rounds of Peter, Heather and Cynthia, shaking hands, on the Continental pattern. Cynthia felt the warm pressure of his fingers, and had a moment's panic fear that she would never see him again. Then Henry came to kiss her goodbye. He held her lightly, and said: "Look after yourself, darling. It won't be long before we're back."

It was rather more than two hours later that Cynthia caught the first gleam of light from the returning boat. She told the other two, and they all watched its approach. Heather called out: "Here we are. What's the news?"

They saw that the boat held only one man now. It was Albrecht, wearing Henry's helmet with the lamp on it.

"Henry's found a place, then?" Peter asked.

"Yes. He has stayed behind."

"What's it like?"

"There is clay there and mud which have perhaps been washed down by the rains—from outside."

"Jolly good," Peter said. "I suppose the idea is we go one at a time. Ladies first?"

"No. Henry desires you to come with me now. Then you can help him at that end. There are side tunnels to be explored, and in one place climbing. We are to take the ropes and irons on this trip. . . ."

The two women watched the boat disappear again. Their sense of loneliness was intensified. And when Albrecht came back to take Heather, Cynthia was faced with the actuality of loneliness. He left a torch with her, and at first she flashed it, now and then, as a means of reassurance.

She also glanced frequently, in the first hour, at the luminous dial of her wrist watch, and marvelled at the slow progress of the fingers round the dial. In the second hour she fell into a reverie of childhood memories and was shaken out of it unexpectedly by a flash of light from the water. She flashed the torch in return, and a few moments later saw Albrecht paddling the little boat towards her.

She stood waiting for him. The light from the helmet, as he got out of the boat and came up to her, was blinding. She whispered: "Turn that off."

He did so, and she went into his arms. "Darling, darling Albrecht!"

"You have been very brave," he said, "to stay behind here by yourself. . . ."

Then she was with him in the boat, paddling across the lake. The landing-place on the other side was a slope leading up towards an egg-shaped cave. Albrecht carried the boat carefully over the broken ground towards the higher level.

"Where are the others?" Cynthia asked.

Albrecht kneeled down to deflate the boat and fold it up. "Henry has been seeking to trace the main course of the stream that runs into the lake. There is a cave up here, and a climb. We will find them there."

"And then, perhaps, soon, we'll be out of the caves?"

He said soberly: "We must hope so. But it may still be very hard."

The climb Albrecht had spoken of proved a fairly simple one. The rock, against which the ladder swung, was wet and slimy. Peter helped her over the top; Heather and Henry were there as well, with the acetylene lamp burning.

They were in a tunnel, about six feet wide and almost as high, its floor silted with mud. It ran straight, on a slightly upward incline, for twenty or thirty feet.

Heather said: "I suppose we couldn't have another tiny snack before setting off again?"

"It's only just after one o'clock," Henry pointed out.

"But we've been up since half-past three."

Henry looked exhausted. He said: "Perhaps we'll knock off a bit earlier—sixish, maybe. But I don't want to hang about longer than necessary."

For a time, the going was fairly easy, but after about a quarter of an hour they found themselves confronted with a stretch of soft and fairly deep mud. When the mud at last gave way to rock, Henry allowed them to rest for five minutes before continuing. When they went on again, they heard a distant whispering which was soon magnified into the unmistakable, melancholy roar of rushing water.

"We must move fast," Henry said. "That sounds like a lot of water. If it comes down here, we're in trouble."

"Why should it come down here?" Peter asked.

"If the storms are continuing outside, there could be sudden flooding. That might be the sort of thing that brings the mud down this passage."

The tunnel was narrowing into little better than a conduit. Soon they were down on hands and knees, with the ribbed roof scraping their backs and the noise of the angry flood growing continually louder.

Henry's voice came back faintly: "I'm through now. I'll help you out at this end."

Without the assurance and confidence that he offered, it would have been a terrifying passage through that narrow pipe of rock into the widening thunder of unseen water. As it was, they managed without much difficulty.

They were now on a ledge of rock, poised over the very edge of a waterfall. Peter flashed his torch and revealed, below the fall, a bubbling pool of water, which appeared to find an outlet on the far side. The water foamed away under an arch of rock which did not rise more than inches clear of it.

Heather said, fear naked in her voice: "After all that, we're stuck here. There's nowhere to go."

The light from Henry's headlamp swept across the river. "It's not quite that bad," he said. "Look over there."

They looked. Several yards upstream, on the other side, there was a ledge a few feet above water level. Once their eyes had grown accustomed to tracing its outline, it was possible to see that it continued, although sharply narrowing, to a point almost opposite them.

Henry took one of the ropes, and tied it round his waist. Albrecht said: "You plan to cross? But it is a swift river, and may be deep."

"I don't think it will be deep right on the edge of the fall," Henry said. "I'm relying on you to keep a firm hold on this end of the rope. When I get across, I'll try to fix my end about four feet above the water level. If you do the same with the other end here, Albrecht, that will give us a holding line for Peter and the ladies. I'll have to ask you to come over on an ordinary life-line, though, if we're going to be able to salvage the holding rope."

As soon as he stepped off the ledge, the water foamed up around his boots, but it did not foam very high. The river near the lip of the fall was not more than a foot deep. At one point he threw up his arms to keep his balance, but he recovered, and two or three steps farther saw him across, and clambering on to the narrow ledge there. He pulled more of the rope over and twisted it round a jutting spear of rock.

Albrecht fastened the line on their side. He said: "We must now tie the other rope round our waists, as a life-line, and then we can go."

Peter said to Heather: "I suppose I'd better carry you across?"

"Yes, please." She added anxiously: "You can, can't you?"

"Yes. You get on the life-line and you can hang on to me while I cross by the holding line."

Albrecht said: "It is best that all should be tied on the life-line."

"Not practicable if I'm carrying Heather," Peter said. "But she won't let go of me in a hurry."

Heather had tied the rope around her waist. "Okay," she said. She clambered on Peter's back and he stepped out into the river, holding the rope which Henry had strung across the fall.

Picked out in the light from the acetylene lamp and, less effectively, the beam from Henry's headlamp, they moved steadily across. Once or twice Peter paused to make sure of his footing. But they were nearly at the other side when he fell. A stone must have turned under his foot and they saw him stagger backwards. He appeared to let go of the holding line to try to get his balance, just as Heather clutched at it for support. In a moment he had fallen over the foaming lip of the waterfall.

Heather fell at the same time, but one rope held her and she held the other. She hung teetering on the very edge, the water washing round her legs, looking down with terror into the cauldron. They saw Peter come to the surface of the furious water. The cauldron was carrying him towards the outlet.

Cynthia said: "She's untying herself from the life-line."

Even as she spoke, Heather freed herself from the rope. She stood briefly, one hand on the holding line, and then dived into the pool below.

The others never saw her again. They saw Peter, when he reached the outlet, try to raise himself to hold the rock face, in a last attempt at survival. His fingers clutched at the low arch for perhaps a second, and then were gone.

Cynthia turned away. She felt Albrecht's arm on her shoulders.

She said: "And Heather?"

"She also, I am afraid."

The roar of the waters had a merciless drumming insistence, but it was something that Cynthia knew she must face before it unnerved her completely.

She said: "The rope is all right?"

"Yes. But do you not wish to wait a little for the shock to go?"

"No. I'll go now."

She stepped out, and felt the vicious undertow as the water whipped towards its plunge. Foot by foot she advanced, her hands on the holding line, conscious of nothing but the twisting weight of water against her legs.

Then there was the sensation of lightness and freedom as she moved out of the water along the last section of the rope, and Henry reached down to help her up.

To be concluded next week

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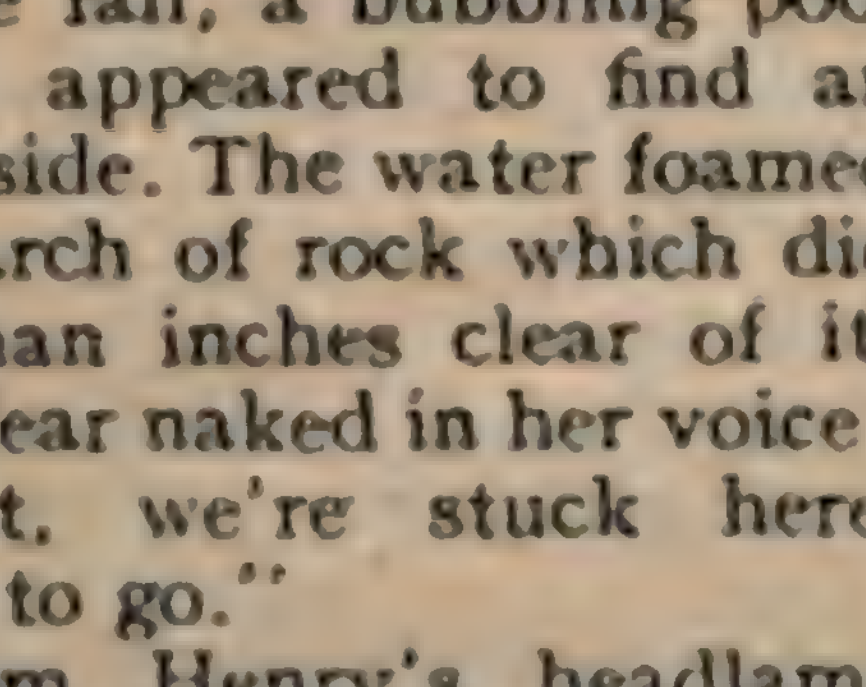
A PROBLEM FOR PERCY THROWER



Strange fruit on Richard Murdoch's tree

RICHARD MURDOCH has a garden in Surrey which contains some fine azaleas, rhododendrons and—in the middle of a flower border—a "family" apple tree which he hopes will bear five dessert varieties (Laxton's Epicure, Worcester Pearmain, Laxton's Fortune, Ellison's Orange, Cox's Orange). "Can Percy Thrower give me any pruning tips?"

PERCY THROWER says:

The important thing with a family tree is to check any fast-growing variety which may later dominate the tree.

A branch that shows excessive vigour can be retarded by tying it down for a month or two, or by summer pruning. An alternative method I use is to "ring" the bark. This should be done next month.

Cut about a quarter of an inch of bark from a strong-growing branch just above or below the point of union between the parent branch and the grafted variety. Bind with insulating tape.

Family trees, whether apple, plum or pear, are useful in small gardens. Personally I think that three varieties of fruit on a tree are enough, though the five-apple trees are most popular.

After buying such a tree it is best to substitute permanent labels for the coloured identity tapes which are tied to the branches.

Feed established trees with a handful of sulphate of potash. Sprinkle it evenly on the soil around the tree before end of May.

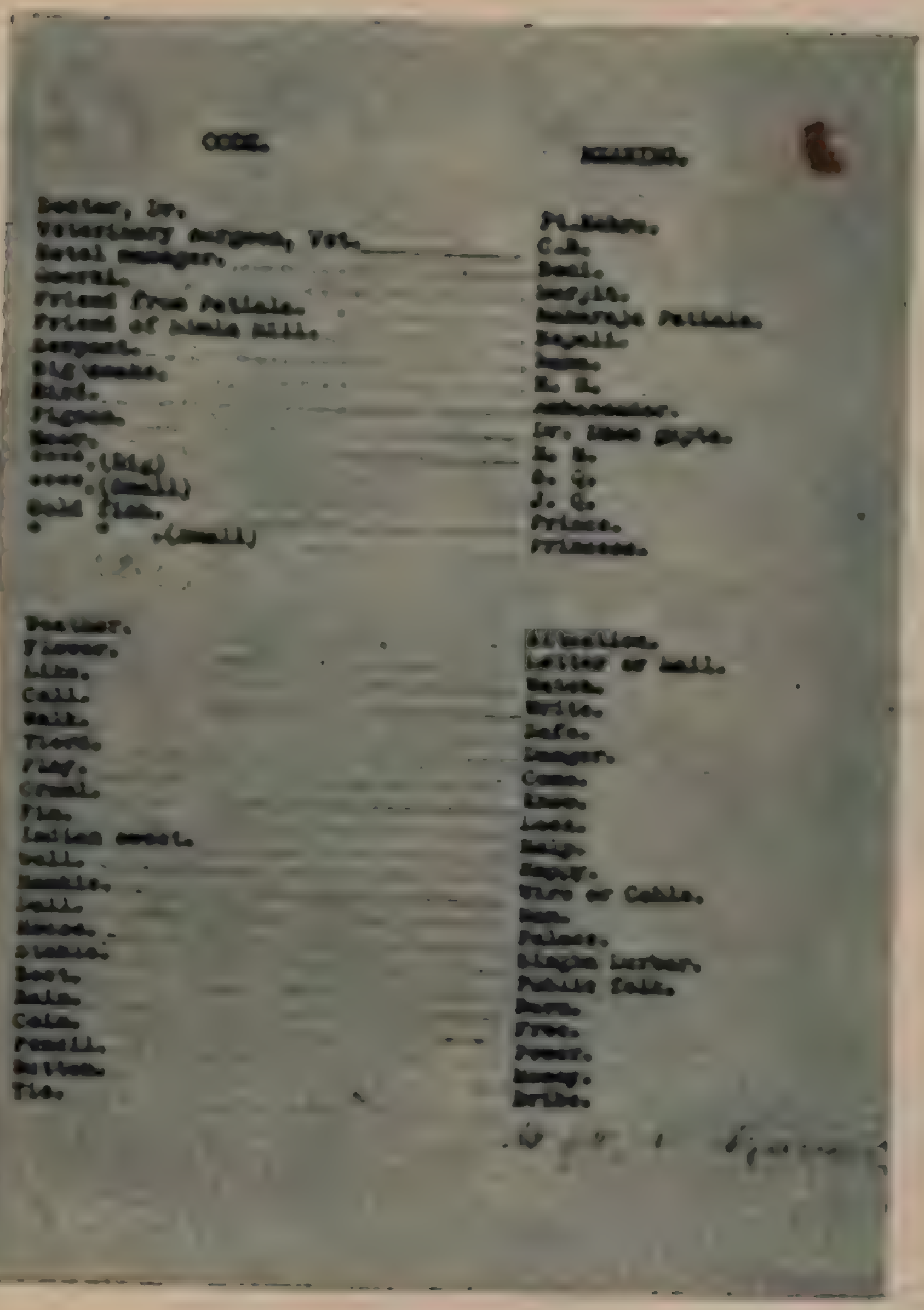
ERIKA AND THE KING OF NEPAL • 3

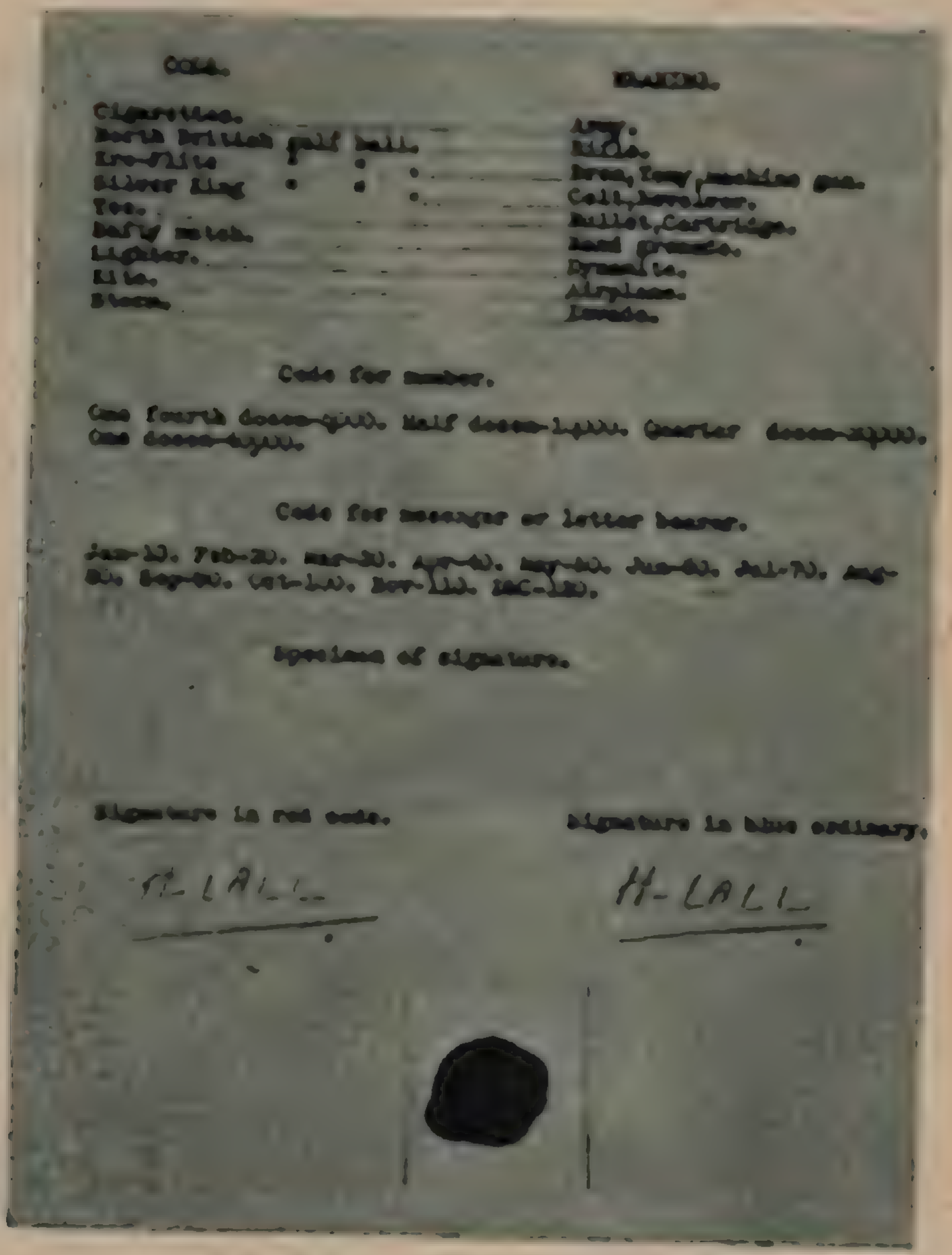
The King stakes his life on a letter

by ERIKA LEUCHTAG

In fear he delayed writing a plea for help. Then he handed it to me. What I did now could bring suicide—or salvation

Before Erika left Nepal she arranged to keep in touch with King Tribhuvana (above) through a code devised by him. "The last few words showed me just how wide the King's ambitions ranged," says Erika





Erika visits the Prime Minister's palace. When she said goodbye to him the King's code was in her handbag

THREE days passed before I had the chance to call upon my friend, Surjit Singh, and ask why he had failed King Tribhuvana. It had been on Surjit, the Indian Ambassador in Katmandu, the capital of Nepal, that the King's hopes, his chance of freedom, rested.

Despite the magnificence in which the tall, handsome King lived, he was a prisoner—a terrible fact I had discovered soon after arriving in Nepal in March, 1949, to give massage treatment to his Senior Queen.

Welcomed into the intimacy of his family circle, I had found that the real ruler of Nepal was the Prime Minister, Mohun Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana.

His power, and the power of his fellow-members of the Rana family, was absolute. The King could not even leave his palace without permission.

I had become a conspirator. I had plotted to help the King to gain the liberty that he so desperately wanted.

At my suggestion he was to meet Surjit, who was shortly being recalled to India, and reveal to him the tragic state of affairs among the people and royalty of Nepal. Once in Delhi Surjit would then tell Pandit Nehru, who would, I felt sure, intervene.

Everything had been arranged. The King, acting with permission of the Prime Minister, had gone to a palace in the nearby foothills to visit Basundhara, one of his three sons. As soon as he was in the palace and out of sight of the guard he had disguised himself as a Nepali peasant and climbed over the palace wall. He had reached the rendezvous, a grove of trees, on time. But two hours later he had returned to Katmandu, his expression ugly and bitter. Surjit had not been there.

I was angry with Surjit and I was frightened. I was afraid that perhaps the Ranas had discovered the plot and that Surjit had cautiously withdrawn from it. But I had underestimated him.

When I went to the embassy, a servant led me upstairs to the ambassador's bedroom, and there he was, ill, his cheeks sunken, his eyes bright with fever. He had been ill for four days, and for the first two of them with so high a temperature that he had been unable to send word for me.

Ill though he still was, he insisted that I sit and talk with him and arrange another meeting with the King.

"But Surjit-ji, you are returning to India," I said.

"There is still time."

He began to talk of the airstrip that was being built outside Katmandu, at Gaochar.

"You know, Erika, your King should seek

Ricory
(our favourite coffee drink)
saves money!

SETTEE BY SELFRIDGES

Nothing could be simpler—pop a teaspoonful in the cup and pour on hot water. (Add milk and sugar to taste, of course.) Nothing could be nicer—the grand satisfying flavour of fine coffee plus the zesty tang of chicory. Nothing could be easier on the "housekeeping" . . . forty-eight heartening cups of Ricory for only half-a-crown. Buy a tin, try a cup—everyone will love it!

In our house we always have

Ricory is a soluble coffee and chicory product composed of the soluble solids from coffee and chicory, powdered with added dextrins, maltose and dextrose.

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Ricory
SOLUBLE COFFEE AND CHICORY PRODUCT
2'6
makes
48 cups

QUICK COFFEE DRINK
BY NESTLÉ's

SR 20

asylum in India. Supposing when I fly home, soon, I took him with me?"

"Surjit-ji, is it possible?"

"That's up to him, but first we'd better meet. You arrange another day."

So once more we planned it. Once more the King went to Basundhara's palace, changed into his disguise, climbed the wall and set out to walk alone to the grove.

When he reached the grove he saw a car waiting, its lights out, and he was about to run to it when the moon came out and shone on leather and bright buttons. The man in the car was not Surjit, but a Rana officer keeping tryst with a shadowy figure in a dark sari. The King lay for long minutes in a ditch, watching the car until it drove away. Then he lay longer still until another car came and stopped beneath the trees, its lights dying.

This time the King saw Surjit's turban, the curled black beard along the line of his jaw. The King rose out of the ditch and ran towards the car. Surjit opened the door, grasped the King by the shoulder, pulling him inside and thrusting him down on to the floorboards. At the same time he started the car. He drove furiously, never once taking his eyes from the roadway to glance at the crouching figure at his feet.

At the Indian Embassy, Surjit pointed his car towards the open doors of the garage. Inside he switched off the engine and the lights, closed the garage doors, and then returned to sit in the car with the King.

What these two men said to each other, what was proposed and agreed between them, I never discovered. Afterwards, all Surjit would say was: "He is a good man, your King, Erika." And, of Surjit, the King said only: "I like him."

The King was driven back to the grove of trees, crouching on the floorboards again, the car rocking violently at high speed on the broken road. He mounted the wall into the garden of his son's palace, bathed, changed, joined his Rana escort and returned to Katmandu.

The wild suggestion that Surjit should fly the King to India came to nothing. There was no time to arrange it, for within a few days Surjit returned to India. A Dakota was flown in from India, landing at Gaochar. It left one afternoon.

That evening was the worst I had ever spent at the palace. The King was a tiger caged in despair. He told me that he, his two queens and the three princesses had stood by the lake, watching the Dakota as it circled the palace and then flew southwards. They watched the sky long after the sound of the engines was gone.

"Erika, my last hope went with it," said the King. "I am in prison again, and I shall never escape. . . ."

The new Indian Ambassador was Sir Chandresvar Prasad Narain Singh. I did not know him. The thought of going to a stranger, and pouring out my heart in a confusion of appeal and exhortation, depressed me.

As soon as I thought it politic after Sir Chandresvar's arrival, and before the King had received him in official durbar, I called at the Indian Embassy and left my card. I wrote to him the same day, welcoming him to Nepal, wishing him success and happiness, and asking for an early opportunity of meeting him to "discuss a matter of extreme importance."

I sent Ghorki Ram, my personal servant, with the letter, and with a sheaf of flowers from my garden. I received a reply from Dr. Shantiswarup Gupta, who had been Surjit's secretary and who was now secretary to Sir Chandresvar.

He thanked me on the ambassador's behalf for the flowers, and added: "His Excellency would be glad if you could see him at ten o'clock on the morning of Thursday next."

SIR CHANDRESVAR was a dignified Hindu in his late forties. He was not tall, and he had none of Surjit's distinct Sikh masculinity, but behind his little black moustache his round face was gentle and compassionate. I do not remember what words I used to tell him my story, except that, towards the end and almost in tears, I said: "Your Excellency, I am so worried, what will happen to the King now?"

He had been listening to me attentively, his body immobile, his hands flat on the desk before him. Now he rose from his chair, came round the desk to me, and placed a hand on my shoulder. "My dear child, don't worry. We shall think of a way to help him."

I asked him how, and he shook his head. "You must give me time to think about this. Ask the King what he wants from me, and then you and I must meet again. But not here. Supposing we arrange a little picnic in the country?"

I went immediately to the palace and told the King of this promise. "Your Majesty," I said, "smile again, please."

Many anxious days later, word came

Cecile
Spring Outfits
Spring is Here
Cecile
Cecile
Cecile
GRAHAM

"That old jacket will have to go to the cleaner's"

HUGHIE GREEN

(television quizmaster) answered six questions on MONEY. Pit your wits against his and try to beat his points score

(Answers on page 32)

1	Why are twenty shillings called a pound?	Because a pound weight of silver used to be made into twenty shillings.
2	What monetary origin has the word salary?	I've used this in one of my quiz shows. Romans used to be paid wages with salt. It was called *salarium*. So—salary.
3	Why does the financial year end on March 31?	It's something to do with the time a couple of hundred years ago when the calendar was changed.
4	What is the origin of the term "I haven't a bean"?	I suppose a bean was the nick-name for something. I'd say a pound.
5	What is the average life of a £1 note, and a 10s. note?	I'd say two years for both of them.
6	What are a dime, a pony and a monkey?	A dime is ten cents. A pony is £25. And a monkey is £500.

from Sir Chandresvar asking if I would give him the pleasure of my company on a visit to Bura-Nilkanta. But on the morning of the day the meeting was to take place there came another note:

I am very sorry, it has not been possible to make a programme for Bura-Nilkanta this afternoon. I am hoping to arrange a trip next Saturday. Yours sincerely—C. P. N. Singh.

Once more the King and I were depressed. We were like children, cautiously fumbling, and frightened that everything we did was or would eventually be discovered by the Ranas.

By the time Saturday came I had heard nothing from the embassy, and had almost decided that Sir Chandresvar had forgotten, when a Sikh messenger walked up my pathway and handed me a letter.

Apropos of our conversation when you saw me last, this is to inquire if 5.15 this afternoon will suit your convenience for going to Bura-Nilkanta—C. P. N. Singh.

That afternoon Sir Chandresvar, Dr. Shantiswarup Gupta and I drove out to Bura-Nilkanta, which lies ten miles to the north of Katmandu, down a grey dust road.

It is a great shrine of Vishnu, Nilkanta the blue-necked one, the "soul of the universe with a thousand eyes, Omniscient, floating on primordial waters, lying on a snake with a thousand hoods."

On arrival there, Dr. Shantiswarup stayed by the car, but the ambassador and I walked across the grass to a dark grove of trees, where nobody could see us or hear us.

"Now, Miss Leuchtag, let us talk about your King. Tell me again what he wants."

"To be the constitutional monarch of a democracy."

Sir Chandresvar smiled at this, but not intolerantly.

"Let us sit down," he said. "This is a great ambition for a man and needs careful thought."

We sat beneath the trees, and it seemed to be very dark there. I told him that Surjit had met the King, and that he had promised to help, even by flying the King out of Nepal to asylum in India, but this had come to nothing with Surjit's recall.

"I think," said Sir Chandresvar, "I also should meet your King." He looked at me closely. "Is he going to overthrow the Ranas?"

"I don't know. All I know is his unhappiness and his longing for India's help. I think he would like Pandit Nehru to know what he is really like."

Sir Chandresvar put his hands on his knees and said: "I shall be going to India soon." He saw the sudden despair in my face. "Don't be alarmed, it will be for a visit only. Perhaps I could talk to Pandit-ji, and perhaps bring a letter back for your King. I say perhaps, you understand, Miss Leuchtag. I can promise nothing."

"Could you take a letter from the King to Nehru?" I asked suddenly.

"I could. Would he write one?"

"I don't know," I said, and I truly did not.

"It is an idea," he said, and stood up. "You must ask him to write to me, and I will ask Pandit Nehru to write to him. Now we must go back."

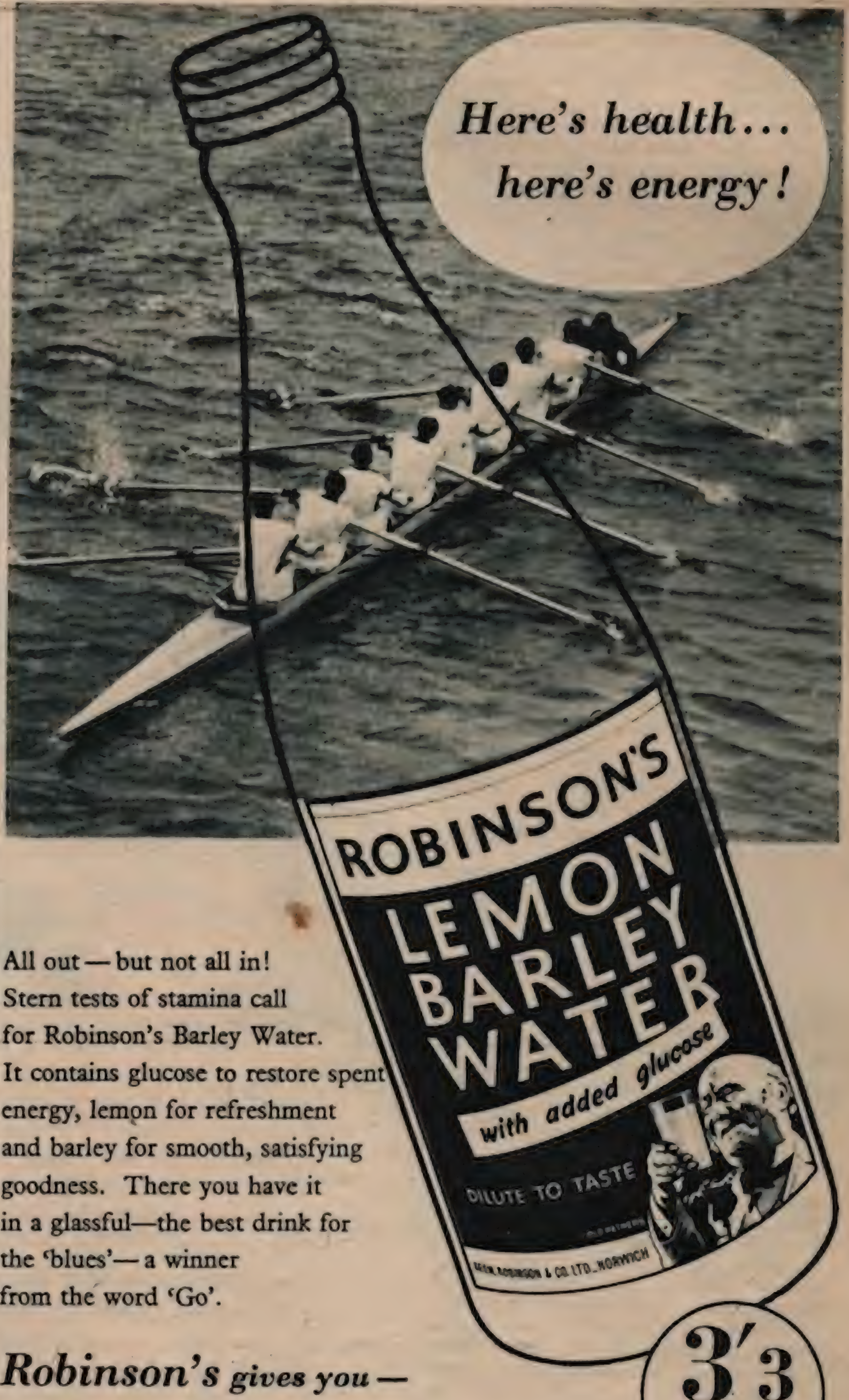
When the car left me at Tripureswar, the guesthouse in Katmandu which was my home, he pressed my hand gently. "Don't worry, my dear child."

It was dusk when I reached the palace. The King was waiting. He took my hand quickly and led me across the lawn. We came to a little veranda beyond the tea pavilion, and as we approached three figures rose to their feet. They were the King's sons—Mahendra in plain Nepali dress, the young Himalaya and Basundhara in thin European suits—and all had their heads bowed, the palms of their hands together, thumbs touching their lips.

That evening the palace once again lived up to its name of the Happy Cottage. We sat together at a little table in the darkness, our faces momentarily revealed by the glow of our cigarettes. The King sat by my side, holding my hand in his and making me repeat again and again the story of the meeting at Bura-Nilkanta. His voice was full of hope and joy. He lifted my hand and said to his sons: "She is my clever Erika. She will help us all."

I believed that the King would write the letter to Sir Chandresvar immediately, but he did not. Day after day he avoided it, and day after day I pleaded with him despairingly. In that despair, perhaps, I did not fully realize what was being asked of him.

For all the years of his life he had



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disciplined himself to betray nothing of his fears, his hopes, or his ambitions. Now he was expected to put them on paper, to entrust that letter first to me and then to a stranger, and finally to believe that it would be treated seriously by the Prime Minister of India. Now I know what doubts he had first to overcome, but in those days I thought only of the unnecessary delay and the fact that Sir Chandresvar would soon be leaving for Delhi.

It was not until July, as we sat alone together in the tea pavilion, that the King silently handed me his letter for Sir Chandresvar. I took it to the embassy early next morning, with a covering letter of my own, and with a flaming torch of flowers from my garden. The ambassador was not there, and, none too happily, I handed the letter to Dr. Gupta, with instructions that it be placed in Sir Chandresvar's hands only.

That afternoon I received a diplomatic reply:

How delightful it is to find a present from you as the first thing this morning. Please communicate my heart-felt thanks for this thoughtful act. I greatly appreciate the gesture.—C. P. N. Singh.

Sir Chandresvar went to Delhi and returned to Katmandu within a few days, bringing with him Nehru's letter to the King. I did not suggest that I should deliver this letter. It was imperative that the King and the ambassador should meet. The simple plan which, in loyalty and devotion to one man, I had put in motion, had now moved on to clandestine negotiations involving the Prime Minister of India.

Surjit's boyish enthusiasm and adventurous nature had given the affair the colour of an escapade, and I had been in emotional sympathy with it. Sir Chandresvar cloaked it with the mystery of high diplomacy, and there was no place for me in this. I did not ask him what Nehru had said, and he did not tell me. He smiled at me reassuringly and said that he hoped to see the King as soon as possible.

And there was the difficulty. We could find no answer to the problem of how the ambassador could meet the King and pass him the letter. My mind was full of fantastic proposals. I told the King that I would hide in the palace overnight, and when the ambassador came I would come out of hiding, attract the attention of his Rana escort, and leave him free to talk to the King.

He smiled at me. "You little optimist, Erika. Do you think that the Prime Minister wouldn't know you hadn't slept at the guest-house?"

So nothing was decided, no plan of mine was feasible.

SADLY I began to prepare my departure. At the Foreign Office, the Foreign Minister, General Bijaya, who was also the Prime Minister's son, told me that I could not take my luggage as it was across the mountains in this monsoon weather. He was having wooden crates made for me, he said, and these would be swung over the mountains by rope railway from Katmandu to Bhimphedi. He seemed genuinely sorry that I was going and, because I had grown to like him I was sorry that he was a Rana.

I went to see Sir Chandresvar as often as I could. Although he was not much older than I, his fatherly manner was comforting. He told me again and again not to worry, that the King would be in his care, and that what could be done, would be done.

Every evening now the King and I sat alone in the gardens or in the dusky tea pavilion, hour after hour, listening to the eternal movement of the streams that flowed through the trees. The King told me much about his life, how in his youth he had determined to make his body and spirit strong, so that the Ranarchy could not debauch him as it had done his father and grandfather. He told me how, each morning, he had wrestled with his Japanese instructor, and how, in the afternoons, he had ridden two horses at great speed, a foot on the saddle of each. He had put his body to great tests of endurance, and he had paid a high price for this desperate attempt to be a whole man. Twice before my coming he had suffered from serious heart attacks.

Such confidence indicated the change in him since the first days I knew him, or at least the change in his attitude towards me. His boyish liking for surprises, however, had not changed. One evening—it was a Thursday, the day of his weekly visit to see the Prime Minister—he said: "This morning the Prime Minister asked me about my dancing lessons, and he wants to see what progress I have made. Tomorrow, put on your nicest cocktail dress, and your best shoes, and we shall give him a performance."

Dutifully I arrived at the palace the next evening in a cornflower-blue dress with tight bodice and flared skirt, high-heeled shoes and my jewels. But the Prime Minister did not come. At the hour he was expected the King led me through the gardens to where his beige Mercury was waiting. He slipped into the driving seat and opened the door for me, his hand out to take mine.

"What about the Prime Minister?" I asked.

"Oh, him!" he said, and he laughed.

I asked no more questions, but let him play out his surprise. We drove alone, no Rana escort with us, so I knew that wherever we were going it would not be far. We turned off the main drive, on to an old road. As we passed some broken walls the King flicked his hand towards them.

"That was my father's private palace," he said, and added sardonically, "where he kept his five hundred wives."

We stopped at a corner of a palace. There were sentries at the doors—not standing, not even alert, but lying on the ground asleep, their backs propped against the wall and their rifles across their legs. The King looked at them and smiled. He put a finger to his lips and tip-toed gently past the soldiers, into the palace, up a wide staircase, at the top of which waited Mahendra and his princess, bowing low.

"You see?" said the King, as if he had explained all this before and I had been too obtuse to understand. "My son wishes to give you a party."

Mahendra was a shy young man, but he and his wife showed me their palace with the pride a Western couple might take in showing their home. I was taken to each room, even to the bedroom with its huge Chippendale bed. Their children came tumbling after us—little girls with powdered faces and jewels in their ears; little boys with the King's sad eyes—and when they had all studied me long enough, and decided that I was no monster, they climbed into my arms, chattering like monkeys.

As we drove back that night to where my car was waiting, the King hummed to himself, as he did when he was content.

Later, on another evening, he suddenly said to me: "Erika, I have a surprise for you. I am building something for you, here in the gardens. It will be yours alone."

"But, your Majesty, you can give me nothing I need."

"You shall see," he said.

Now and then in the evenings that followed, while we danced the Western dances I had taught him, I heard a hammering and a banging from beyond the palace. The King did not mention the matter again, but when the noise grew unusually loud he would look at me with suppressed amusement. Then for three days I heard no noises.

On the evening of the third day, the King took my hand and said: "Tonight we shall not dance upstairs. Come with me." He took my hand, the Senior Queen, whom I had nicknamed Birdy, the Junior Queen, whom I had nicknamed Dreamy, and the three princesses following with little smiles of excitement on their lips. We walked around the portico, past the lawn, and into a courtyard enclosed on three sides by the Happy Cottage.

The King looked at Dreamy, and she gave him a key which he placed in my hand. It was stamped from rich yellow gold, and engraved upon it was the letter E. He pointed to a building at the far side of the courtyard. "It is yours, Erika," he said. "Put on the light above the door and you will see."

I switched on the light, and it glowed on a plate that said: ERIKA DANCE HALL.

I put the key in the lock and opened the door, King, queens and princesses crowding about me to see the delight in my face and clapping happily. The door opened on to a long, rectangular room where light glimmered on salmon and silver walls. The rich curtains that hung across the windows were salmon and silver, too, and the floor was smooth and shining in parquet blocks. There was a radio-gramophone, and a grand piano with my birthday portrait framed upon it. There were flowers everywhere and a heavy, pervading perfume. I walked alone into the room, opened the piano, and softly touched a key. The sound did not break the spell.

"Come," said the King. "Now we shall dance in your own dance hall. . . ."

Another day he said: "Erika, I wish to honour you in a very special way. I want you to dine with us in the Holy Rice Hall at Naran Hity."

I had been in the East long enough to appreciate the sacred significance of rice. I had been warned that, in Nepal, rice was even more sacred than in India. Thus the King's invitation to the Rice Hall moved me deeply.

That evening it was very hot, no moon, and the sky a great indigo bowl of stars. We walked slowly through the gardens, the King and I first, hand-in-hand, and the queens and the princesses following, magnificently dressed.

We walked between the magnolia bushes to the official palace, which was used only on ceremonial occasions, and paused at the top of its broad staircase, before two great doors of gold, scarlet and ivory. There were hand-basins with hot and cold water, soft, fleecy towels. We washed our hands and we cleansed our mouths, and, instinctively, I removed my shoes. The King opened the doors and we walked into a long, high hall of white and black marble, with tall french windows along one wall. I do not remember seeing any lamps, but there was light—a wonderful amber glow.

This, said the King, in a whisper, was the Rice Hall where he ate the life-sustaining grain in ceremonial dinners with his Brahmin priests.

At the far end, on a shallow dais, were seven low tables and seven low stools, placed in two rows, of four and three, and facing each other. Each table was covered by a white cloth and had a golden *thal*—a round plate—piled with yellow rice. About it were silver and gold dishes containing meat, fish, vegetables, chutney and chupattis.

The King did not dine with us, but stood apart, watching silently. We, too, did not speak as we ate, leaving the left hand unused in our laps, breaking a piece of chupatti with the right hand and picking up the rice with it.

The following evening we returned to the official palace, the King and I, and alone. He did not take me to the Rice Hall, but to another, almost as large. There, in the empty silence and the glitter of gold, silver and cut-glass, were long tables laid with rice, meat and fish.

"What is it for?" I asked.

"For my grandson tomorrow morning," he said wistfully. "*Annaprasan*, the ceremonial rice-feeding. When a Hindu boy is six months old he is given a few grains of consecrated rice, and the men of his caste eat with him, and so he is initiated."

For a long time, and without speaking again, he stared at the silent room, and I loved him for wanting to show me this. . . .

I HAD often said, as the time for leaving came closer: "I cannot go back to India and not hear from you. I must write to you, and you must write to me, and I shall tell you what I am doing in India to help you."

He shook his head. "It's impossible. I cannot send a letter, and I cannot receive one that the Ranas will not see."

"There must be someone here we could trust, someone who could deliver my letters to you."

He shook his head again. "There is no one to trust."

"I shall find someone, and you must find someone. Between us we shall make it possible."

And we did.

It was, perhaps, inevitable that I

APRIL

FREDA C. BOND

Almost before she's here, she's gone—
Young April, shaking
A rain of jewelled blossoms on the grass,
Her light steps making
No footprints as they pass.
But had we power to freeze
To sculptured loveliness the spangled trees,
Should we not find
Magic had taken wings and left behind
A stale, accustomed thing?
Better quick come, quick go.
Dawn chorus, opening bud and emerald branches—so
Magic is born anew with every spring.

should think of Dr. Dass Gupta, a physician to the royal family who had been trained in Italy. I had grown very fond of him and frequently called on him.

He was a middle-sized, ordinary man, his hair brushed back from his rather large head, and his expression very gentle.

When I was with him I had always been aware of the fact that his attachment to me went beyond our common love of Italy, and it was this awareness that convinced me that I could trust him.

I called upon him a week or so before my departure, and he came into the garden to greet me, in his *dhoti* and sandals, the palms of his hands pressed together in the attitude of *namashkar*, meaning: "I greet the Divine in you."

I said: "Doctor Sahib, I must talk to you, but not here. Somewhere where we can be alone."

"*Signorina*, when I go out I am always watched. It is known where I go, whom I speak to. Is it important?"

"It is very important, Doctor Sahib. And nobody must hear what we say."

"Very well," he said. "Let us go for a walk."

We went along the road to the river, down a dark lane walled by trees, to a rope suspension bridge spanning the river. On this we stood, alone, unheard from either bank, and I told him as much as I could—that I was trying to help the King, that he wished to reign over a free people, and that when I returned to India I wished to write to him. Would the doctor see that my letters reached the King?

He looked gravely at the yellow water below us. "His Majesty and I are never alone together," he said at last. "But I will try. Tell His Majesty that I will try. . . ."

I had to assure myself that my letters would reach the doctor. I had no high opinion of the Nepali Post Office and I knew also the Ranas operated a semi-censorship of all mail that passed through it. If I addressed my letters to the Dr.-Sahib they would be handled and delivered by the Nepalis.

I thought of this problem for some time before I reached a solution which, as is often the case, was very simple and very obvious. I decided that if the Master of the Indian Post Office in Katmandu agreed I could forward the letters to his care and ask him to pass them on to Dr. Dass Gupta.

The same day as I decided upon this I went to the Indian Post Office. I could not go during the hours it was open, for then Sher Bahadur Gurung, the postmaster, sat in public behind his counter, and what was said to him or by him could be heard by all. I went early in the morning, when the office was closed and silent. I knew that he lived behind the post office, and I found a door in the garden wall at which I knocked for a long time before it was opened by the postmaster.

I said: "Master-ji, forgive me, but I urgently need stamps to write to my mother in Simla."

He opened the door to let me in to the courtyard, and I closed it behind me securely.

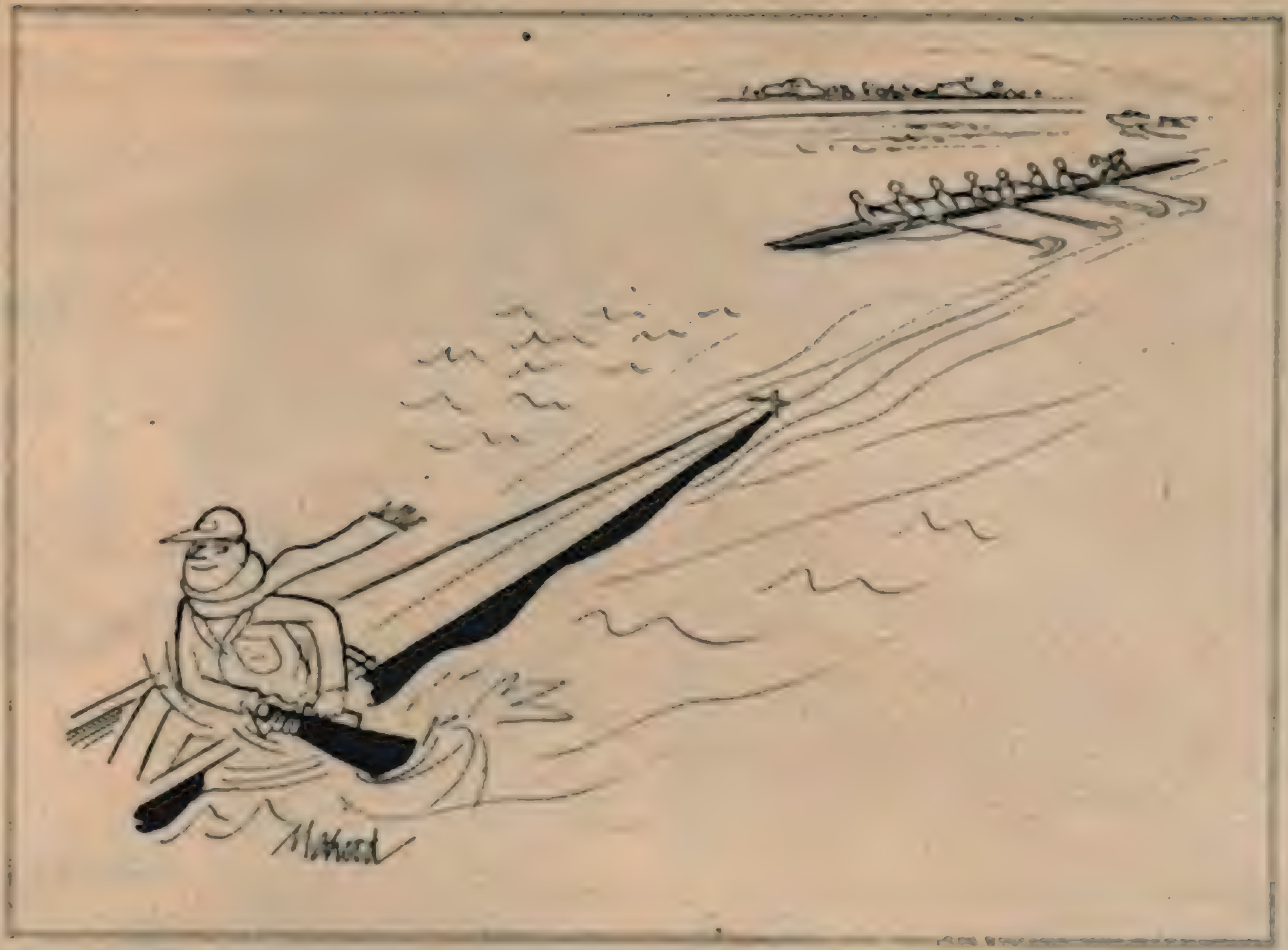
"Madam, the post office is closed."

I said: "It doesn't matter about the stamps. I wanted to talk to you. I am going home to India soon. If I dispatch some letters to you from Simla, will you promise that you will place them in Doctor Dass Gupta's hands?"

I had expected some argument, or at least a request for an explanation, but he looked at me very closely and said: "Of course, madam. You may trust me."

It was that simple.

The King was still not satisfied. He decided that there must be a code which we could use in our letters should the situation need it. The devising of such a code gave him the same pleasure which it would have given a schoolboy, and when he had finished it he handed me a copy with a slight flourish of pride. He had typed it himself on two sheets of blue stippled writing-paper, on the second of which he had affixed his seal, red wax with T, his initial, impressed on it.



He told me that his letters would be signed "H. Lall," and that when this was written in red ink then the letter would contain a message in code. If it became necessary to avoid using my name I would be addressed as "Lakshmi"—meaning escort—and in my heart I thanked him for this.

The code itself consisted of alternative words for forty-five people and things. Thus Pandit Nehru was referred to as "Doctor," and "Ghorki" meant Surjit Singh. "Big Snake" meant the Prime Minister; "Bird" was Sir Chandresvar, and "Moor" was the King. "Tee" meant bullet or cartridge; "Lighter" meant dynamite; "Kite" meant aeroplane, and "Storm" meant invasion.

The last few words in the code showed just how wide the King's ambitions ranged, but I do not think their significance struck me at the time. We were sitting in my dance hall when he gave me the code, on one of my last evenings at the palace, and from then until I reached India, it burned a hole wherever I placed it. I hid it in a different place every day, and several times a day.

It was in my handbag the day I went to pay official farewell to the Prime Minister at his palace, Singha Durbar. Some days earlier I had written to him, telling him that I would soon be leaving Nepal, thanking him for his presents and his hospitality. He promptly replied through his private secretary, Sardar Dixit.

"*I write to inform you that His Highness the Maharaja will receive you for leave-taking on Wednesday next at four o'clock in the afternoon. I have to request you to attend Singha Durbar at the time stated.*"

I scarcely remember the details of that "leave-taking." The code was in my handbag in my lap, my mind and heart were full of sadness at what seemed to be my desertion of the King. My efforts to help him had come to nothing, or so it seemed. He had not met Sir Chandresvar, and Pandit Nehru's letter was still undelivered. I remember only the Prime Minister's face as he sat on the couch with me—a pale, bland moon, his hand rhythmically brushing his hooped moustache.

What he said was only polite and bored small-talk. In a few minutes he rose, shook my hand, and departed through the far doors, surrounded by his escort of officers. . . .

The King would not speak of my going, as if it were not to happen, and it was I who had to bring the fact into the open between us. I had fixed my departure for the last day of July, when the monsoon rains would be slackening. I said to the King: "I cannot bear to say goodbye to you, any of you. I shall leave the palace one evening, just as usual, and never come back."

He said: "You cannot do that, Erika, we love you too much. Such things must be done, properly. You must tell us the day you are going, and you must take leave of us."

I refused to tell him, but he was not a fool. He discovered the day somehow, and during the brief time left to us he made his feelings manifest in a dozen ways. I had often asked him to show me the private rooms of the Happy Cottage, pestering him, I suppose, and he had always answered: "Yes, some time. Some time, perhaps."

Now, in his final demonstration of trust, he showed me all. He made the occasion a ceremony, of course. We went in a little procession—first the King and myself, then the queens and princesses in a rustling stream of coloured saris.

I was shown the bedrooms of the two Queens. But for their colour—powder blue for the Senior Queen and dusty pink for Dreamy—they were identical and western in style. In each the floors were covered with thick, white fur rugs. The windows were closed tight, and the atmosphere drenched in perfume. There were sitting-rooms with table, chairs and sofa, brocaded furnishings, a wireless set, and a riotous fall of rich flowers from every cupboard and shelf.

The King walked happily about these rooms, pulling out drawers, opening the doors of cupboards to show me saris, underwear, stockings, furs and sandals. The queens and princesses stood with their hands clasped loosely, and on each face was a smile of pride, pleasure and approval.

AUTHORSHIP—2

Literature is like any other trade; you will never sell anything unless you go to the right shop.

Bernard Shaw

From the bedrooms we went downstairs to the palace kitchens, their equipment white, red and shining, and as magnificent as the most ambitious American advertisements wherein the King had no doubt first seen them.

He drew my attention to the electric ovens, the enormous refrigerator, the ranging cupboards of stainless steel, the white tiles and glistening chromium. On from this unexpected miracle we went to the King's special pride, a suite of rooms unequalled by any photographer in Bond Street—reception room, studio, darkroom, workroom and stores.

"My reception room," said the King. "But whom do I receive?"

While I stared in amazement, the King moved about, touching his possessions in gentle affection. . . .

I was due to leave Katmandu on July 31. Everything was prepared, the eight wooden crates which Bijaya had sent me were filled. Bijaya, himself, had said goodbye to me with obvious regret. To Sir Chandresvar, also, had I said goodbye, imploring him not to forget the King.

Now there remained my leave-taking from the royal family. I decided that I would go to the Happy Cottage for the last time on the twenty-ninth. I went hoping that my face was not betraying my feelings. The princesses were waiting for me in the gardens, and we sat together, saying little, watching the lake, the flowers closing, and darkness coming. Then I stood up, and ran across to the portico, standing beneath the windows of the King's bedroom. I began to sing to him, the first few bars of "Santa Lucia." He came out immediately on to the terrace and stood smiling.

When at last he came down to the garden with the queens, he was not smiling. He took my hand between both of his. "This is your last evening with us."

"It's my last evening with you," I said.

"Then we shall dance, all of us, just as usual." He led me to my dance hall, asking for the key when we reached it. When he had opened the door he stood back.

There was scarcely an inch of room that was not covered with presents. They spilled on to the floor from the chairs, the tables, the radio-gramophone and the piano, a rainbow of coloured paper and ribbons. The queens and princesses knelt among them, bringing them to me, the nicknames I had given them written on pasteboard cards. There were clothes, ornaments and jewellery—diamond earrings in the shape of flowers from the King, a watch in a ruby-encrusted horseshoe of gold from Dreamy, a golden compact from Birdy. And more, and more they brought me.

I could say nothing. Love and gratitude, loyalty and pity overwhelmed me. I sat down and put my hands over my face. The King took them away gently.

"Erika, *maffi du*, forgive me, I am only a poor Nepali and know no better. If we have offended you, forgive us."

Dreamy came to me. "Erika, *maffi du*!" And Birdy, too. "Erika, *maffi du*!" They all sat with me on the sofa, the presents at my feet and on my lap, and again and again they whispered "Erika, *maffi du*." I bent before the King and touched his feet.

"Your Majesty, I meant this to be my last evening, but I must come again now. May I come tomorrow for the last time?"

They were happy again then, and the King said: "I knew you would come."

So the next evening I came again, no longer in a cocktail dress, but in my travelling suit, for everything else had been packed. The queens and the princesses were waiting by the lake, and the sudden appearance of them shocked me. All were dressed in black saris as a sign of grief at my departure.

When the King came, he was dressed wholly in white, the colour of mourning—white cap, shirt, waistcoat, jacket and jodhpurs. His face was sad, but he took my arm and said lightly: "Now let's dance."

Once more I was led to my dance hall, and once more it was filled with presents—gold, silver, silk and ivory, and a zip-fastener bag to hold them.

Nobody could dance, and we scarcely spoke. We ate a little, and we drank a little champagne, and the queens and the princesses sat sadly in their black saris, diamonds shining in their hair and tears in their eyes. When I could stand no more, I stood up. "Your Majesty, may I go, please?"

He and his family arose. Rain was falling outside, suddenly they all had black umbrellas in their hands, crowding close to shelter me. When we reached the little veranda, where the King and I had once sat with his sons, I stopped. I bent before Tribhuvana.

"*Namashkar*, your Majesty," I said, and to the queens and princesses also.

I ran from them quickly, without looking back, through the door in the wall, through the courtyard, through to the great sweep of steps that led down to my car. Awaiting me there, each beneath an umbrella, were all the ladies-in-waiting from the Happy Cottage, presents in their hands, and tears mixing with the rain on their cheeks.

It was still raining when I left Tripureswar early next morning for the mountain pathway to India.

NEXT WEEK: The King makes a frantic dash for freedom

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Afternoon of TERROR

by FRANK BENNETT

THEIR terror began when Christine saw the empty push-chair standing on the pavement. But, before that, Christine and Tom Austin had quarrelled violently. Just before he'd gone slamming out of the front door, Tom had shouted, "All right then, if that's the way you feel about me and my job, you might as well go home to your mother."

"If I do, I'll never come back," Christine retorted. Then, still furious with him, but a little frightened by the things they'd said, she rushed to the door and called, "Wait, Tom. Aren't you going to take me to the shops?"

"Perhaps the walk will cool you down," he shouted back.

A moment later Christine heard him drive away and she was very sure then that she would go back to her mother and the roomy old house at Dorking. Tom, she thought, had no right to expect her and Jimmy to live where noise, discomfort and loneliness met them at every turn.

But now, as she walked towards the shops, with little eighteen-months-old Jimmy peacefully asleep in his push-chair, her anger collapsed, leaving her weak, frightened and trembling. She and Tom had had their arguments, but never before had they quarrelled so violently—or parted so angrily.

It's this place, she told herself. *And the flat—we've never had to live in a place like this before. It's not that we don't love each other—we just get on each other's nerves here.* And she frowned at the grim, grey street of the little northern town.

When she reached the supermarket another stir of anger ran through her. *It wouldn't have taken Tom five minutes to bring me down here for the few things I need,* she thought.

She walked round the corner of the building. Traffic moved along the High Street in an endless procession. It was a warm, heavy day, and her head was throbbing. When the traffic stopped for the lights, she was vaguely aware of the laughter of small children playing in a dingy park across the street. *Strange,* she thought wearily, *how children have all that energy.*

She glanced at Jimmy. His round baby face wore a pink, comical expression and his fair hair was rumpled and damp. He was a strong, beautiful baby. She had an impulse to take him in her arms and hold him close.

The traffic began to move again, drowning the laughter of the children in the park. Christine turned to look through the window into the shop. The place was busy, and she felt a sense of dismay at the thought of wheeling Jimmy through the narrow, crowded aisles. It would only take a minute for her to pick up the few things she needed—and Jimmy was sleeping so peacefully. Carefully she rolled the push-chair tightly against the front of the building.

"What a pretty baby!"

Startled, she turned to face a tall, thin woman in a worn fur coat. "Thank you," she said a bit uncertainly.

"He's precious!" the woman said, leaning over to touch Jimmy's chubby fist. "I lost my baby when he was ten months old."

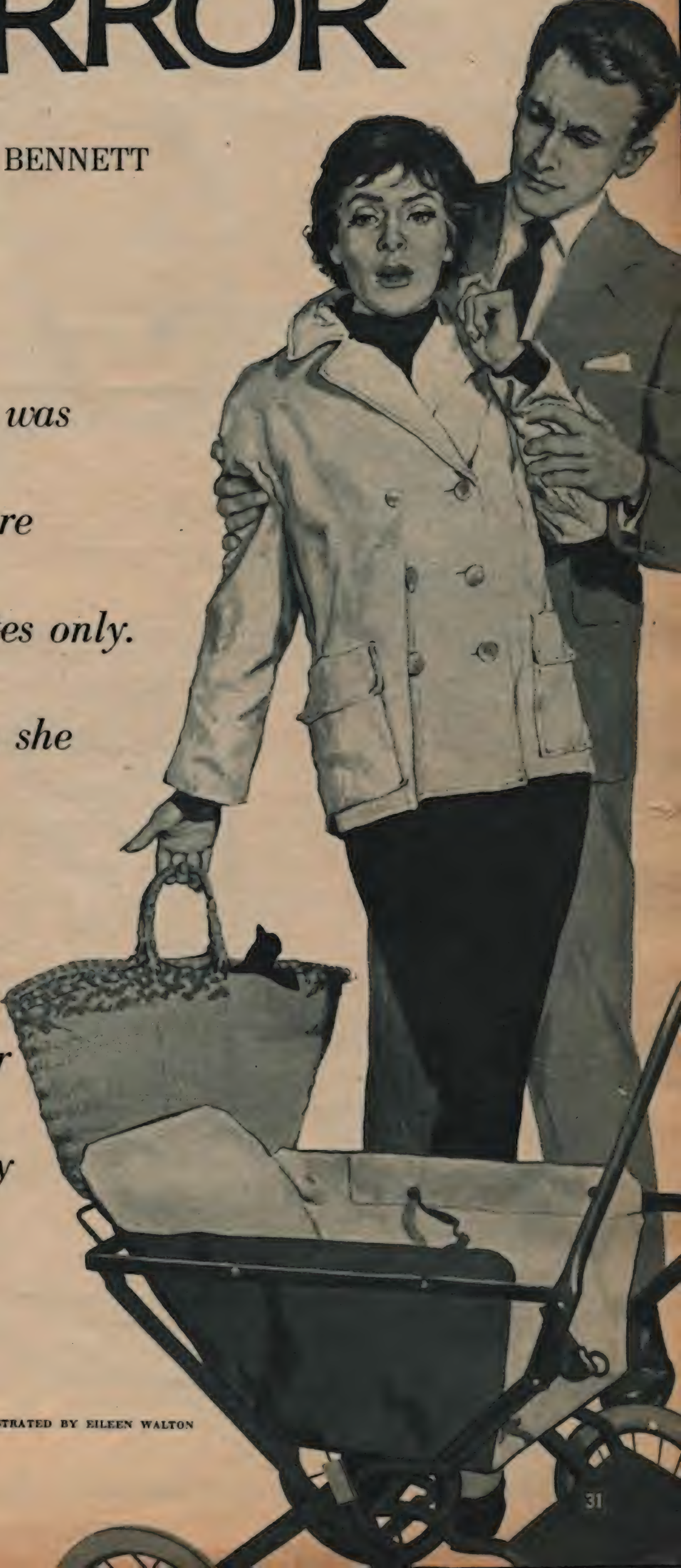
"Oh, I'm terribly sorry," Christine murmured.

Sighing, the woman tightened her arms about her bundle of groceries and turned away. Christine glanced at the gold comb fixed in her greying hair. A moment later, the woman had disappeared.

Christine looked at Jimmy. Sure that he would be all right, she left him and went into the shop. . . .

By the time Tom Austin reached the by-pass, his anger had begun to cool, and he knew he didn't want to go any farther with all those hateful words lying between him and Chris. He drove into a lay-by, and pulled his car to a smooth stop. For a time he sat there staring ahead, watching the traffic streaming past. How

Christine was in the store for minutes only. But when she came out the push-chair was empty



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had the quarrel begun? Probably there was no exact moment or word of beginning. It had come about as the result of a cumulation of events and circumstances.

Chris did not like the four-room flat or the district. She hadn't tried to make any friends. And of course she blamed him for everything, for he had come here a week before she had and had taken the flat. But it was the best thing he could find in this little town crowded with people who had come here to work in the new factories.

His dark eyes narrowed. Of course Chris didn't like to be left alone. But this chasing around he had to do was part of his job as area manager. In fact he was on his way to a distant town now to check on a newly installed machine. Chris couldn't seem to get it through her head that a man's work was important.

Perhaps I should've stayed in the old rut and let the future go hang, he thought, angry again. But of course he knew better than that. When a promotion came along, a man had to grab it. He knew he loved Chris and that she loved him. There was Jimmy too. Jimmy was a strong bond between them, there was no question about that. But Tom also knew that words of anger left to smoulder could be a destructive force between a man and his wife.

Suddenly he wished with all his heart that he had curbed his temper. He swung the car round and drove back towards his home.

He parked near the flats and hurried up the stairs. When he rang the bell, there was no answer.

A feeling of panic ran through him. Surely Chris hadn't had time to pack and leave for the south? He unlocked the door with his own key and went in. A glance into the bedroom convinced him that she hadn't left him.

He went to the window and looked up and down the empty street. Then he remembered she'd said something about needing a few things from the supermarket. A few minutes later he was parking in the High Street.

A car almost backed into him—an old green tourer with a woman driver: she hadn't even bothered to look round. He caught a glimpse of her, as she passed, of the tawdry fur and the gipsy-like comb in her hair. Then he pulled into the space she'd vacated and climbed out. *Women drivers!*

Rounding the front corner of the shop, Tom saw the push-chair. It was empty, which meant that Chris and Jimmy must be inside. He would get some cigarettes next door, and then wait for them on the kerb. . . .

It took Christine only a few moments to select the items she needed, but getting out was a different matter. There was a queue waiting to pay, and the shoppers' baskets were piled high.

Once she had a strong impulse to step out of line and run to the window to look at Jimmy. But she curbed it. If she lost her turn, it would be that much longer before she could get out of the shop.

The woman ahead of her glanced round, and Christine saw that she was a Mrs. Denton who lived in one of the ground-floor flats in the same block.

"Hot, love, isn't it?" Mrs. Denton said.

Christine nodded rather distantly. She knew very little about Mrs. Denton —or about any of her neighbours, for that matter.

Her dislike of the town and of the poky flat had given her an attitude of indifference towards the people who lived close to her.

"You walking, love?" Mrs. Denton asked.

Again Christine nodded.

"You come back with me," the woman said. "And drop in for a nice cup of tea."

For the first time, Christine really looked at Mrs. Denton. The woman was grey-haired, pudgy and red-faced. Her cheap brown coat was rather worn.

"Thank you," Christine said, "but I've got some more shopping to do. Some other day, perhaps."

Mrs. Denton turned away a bit stiffly; and Christine thought, *Was I rude? Well, suppose I was—I've had about all I can take in this place.* Once again, she felt a stir of frustration and anger.

At last it was her turn to pay and, a moment later, she stepped out into the afternoon heat. For a moment the sun's glare blinded her, and she paused just beyond the door. The traffic had stopped again, and she was vaguely aware that the silence was more complete than it had been before she went into the shop.

Then she saw the empty push-chair.

At first she could not think. Then a weakness came to her. With a hoarse cry she started towards the push-chair. But the weakness struck her knees, and she would have fallen if strong arms hadn't reached out and caught her.

"What's wrong, Chris?"

Could it be Tom's voice? No, Tom was miles away and still angry with her. Then she lifted her head and saw his face and the startled expression in his dark eyes and knew that in some miraculous way he had come back to her. But she was beyond searching for any reason for his being here.

"Jimmy!" Her voice was a strange, hoarse sound. "I left Jimmy out here in the chair."

Tom stared at her. He stared at the empty push-chair. He seemed unable to grasp the situation.

"You mean you left him while you went into. . . ."

She saw his face suddenly go tense and pale. "Oh, Tom," now she was beginning to cry, "I was sure he'd be all right. I've seen other babies left out here. I——"

"Stop crying!" he said, giving her a rough shake. "Nothing's happened to him. He just woke up and started looking for you."

By then, curious people were crowding about. Glancing up, Christine saw Mrs. Denton, her short, fat arms gripping a bulging bag of groceries.

"Now don't you get excited, Mrs. Austin," Mrs. Denton said, stepping forward. "We'll find your baby."

"A little fair boy," Tom said to the crowd. "About eighteen months old. Large for his age."

"Dressed in a yellow suit," Christine added.

Tom and the shoppers began to move away to look for Jimmy. Mrs. Denton set her bag of groceries on the pavement and put a comforting arm about Christine's shoulders.

"Don't cry, love," she said. "Any second now, somebody's going to find your baby."

"It's all my fault," Christine said in a bitter wave of self-reproach. "I shouldn't have left him out here alone."

"Nonsense!" Mrs. Denton said

CHALLENGE THE FAMOUS

In his answers to six questions on money on page 27, Hughie Green scored five points. He answered the first question correctly. A pound weight of silver was based on the Saxon pound of 5,400 grains which was coined into 240 silver pennies or twenty shillings.

He was right over Question 2 —this payment in kind also gave rise to the expression "worth his salt"—and right about Question 3. Before 1752 the Julian year began on March 25, and it was customary to complete treasury accounts within a week after the end of the old year. The Gregorian calendar now ends on December 31, but custom tended to retain March 31 for the end of the financial year and this was established by Act of Parliament in 1854.

His answer to Question 4 looks like a good guess—a bean was originally the nickname for a guinea. But over Question 5, which needed a good guess, he was wrong. A pound note is generally reckoned to last just over a year, and a ten shilling note eight months. His answers to Question 6 were all correct.

NEXT WEEK

A long extract from
Humphrey Lyttelton's

sparkling book
SECOND CHORUS

In stately homes and in cellar clubs his trumpet leads debs and jive fiends a merry dance. Read "Humph's" scintillating story of the riotous world of jazz—before his book is published

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severely. "Why, I've seen a whole row of babies left out here while their mothers went inside for something. Anyway, you'll soon have him back, safe and sound. Never will forget the time our Rosemary strayed away. We lived in Cheshire then. . . ."

Christine stared at the woman. For some reason, she'd never thought of Mrs. Denton as ever being a young mother with a baby.

"We found her out in the meadow picking wild flowers," Mrs. Denton went on. "Not a scratch on her. No harm done, except to scare the daylights out of John and me. So. . . ."

Now the searchers were coming back, with expressions of puzzlement and anxiety on their faces.

"How long were you inside?" a man asked.

"Five minutes, perhaps," Christine answered faintly.

"A baby wouldn't get very far in five minutes," somebody murmured. And another voice added, "Unless he was kidnapped."

Suddenly horror was added to Christine's terror. Again her knees grew weak, and again, if it had not been for Tom, she would have fallen.

After that, she and Tom were led into the shop. The police came, three serious men—two of them in uniform. The third man, tall, stooped, dressed in a wrinkled suit, asked questions.

"You sure you've told us everything, Mrs. Austin?" he demanded at last. "You sure you didn't see anything or anybody unusual? Nobody following you or watching you?"

"There was a woman," Christine remembered suddenly. "She stopped and told me what a pretty baby Jimmy was. She said her own baby died before he was a year old. She touched Jimmy's hand. Then she went on round the corner of the building."

She saw the three policemen exchange glances and knew by the tightening of their faces that they were suddenly more alarmed than they had been.

"Can you describe this woman?"

"Tall and dark and thin. A fur coat. A good one, I think, but old. A comb in her hair. It glittered. . . ."

"I saw her!" Tom broke in hoarsely. "I remember the comb. She backed her car out in front of me."

"Describe the car," the tall man snapped.

"Lord," Tom said, putting his fists against his forehead, "if I'd only really looked at it! An old car—an old green tourer."

One of the girls on the cash desks remembered seeing the woman with the gold comb, but she had no idea who she was. Nobody else seemed to have noticed her.

"If she lives in this district, we'll find her," the policeman said. "Somebody sells petrol and oil for that old green car. Somebody will know who she is."

After that, Tom helped Christine to their car and they went back to the flat. They had scarcely stepped inside when Mrs. Denton and several other women arrived. They, too, looked frightened and angry, for they had children or grandchildren of their own and knew this might have happened to any one of them.

"We want to help you, Mrs. Austin," a tired-looking young woman said. "Even if we can't do anything but keep you company."

"I'll never leave my baby alone for a minute," another young woman declared in a shaky voice.

After Tom had left to help in the search for Jimmy, Mrs. Denton took charge. She made Christine lie down. But Christine couldn't lie still or rest, and presently she went back into the front room where the women sat talking in hushed and frightened voices. She saw then that some of them had brought gifts—jugs of coffee, biscuits, sandwiches—and she felt a choking gratefulness towards these people whom she scarcely knew and had cared nothing about before.

"It's very kind of you to come here," she said brokenly. "I hardly know how to thank you."

"Don't try, love," Mrs. Denton said quickly. "Just sit down and rest."

Christine sat near the phone. She felt cold, and a terrible trembling filled her. Suppose the woman could not be found? Suppose Jimmy were lost to her for ever?

Outside the shadows grew long, and some of the women left. But others came quickly to take their places. Presently somebody came in with more coffee and a tray of sandwiches. At Mrs. Denton's insistence, Christine choked down a few bites and drank some coffee. When next she glanced through a window, she saw that darkness had fallen.

Staring at the dark window, she tried to remember every little event of the afternoon: the quarrel with Tom, his angry departure; the walk through the noisy streets; the anger in her own heart. How very, very childish it all seemed now.

She heard Tom's step on the stairs, and a moment later he came into the room. He looked old and tired and defeated.

"Have they found anything?" she asked, although already she knew the answer.

He shook his head and put a hand

AUTHORSHIP—3

The writer does his work alone, and if he is a good enough writer he must face eternity, or the lack of it, each day.

Ernest Hemingway

---

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"Glad to meet you—though I'd hoped that we'd get somebody with a power mower this time"

on her shoulder. When she felt his hand trembling, she was more frightened than ever.

"They found the woman," he said hollowly. "The police have questioned her. She's all right. She didn't take Jimmy."

What little hope Christine had had was snuffed out. She buried her face in her hands and asked: "What now, Tom?"

He had no answer for her.

"They'll find your baby," Mrs. Denton spoke up. Then she led the other women out of the room to leave Christine and Tom alone for a few minutes.

SLOWLY Christine lifted her tired shoulders. "Tom," she whispered, "it's all my fault."

"No!" His big fingers tightened on her shoulder. "If I hadn't lost my temper and run out on you, you wouldn't have had to go to the shops alone. Then it wouldn't have happened."

"But I'm the one who—"

"We're in this together, Chris," he said fiercely. "He belongs to both of us. We're both to blame."

"Oh, Tom. . . ." She could no longer hold back the tears.

He let her cry for a while. Then he said: "Chris, you didn't see anything else suspicious—anybody besides the woman?"

She shook her head despairingly.

"Let's talk about it," he said. "Just you and I—now that we're alone with it. Think back, dear. Try to remember every little detail of everything that happened. Perhaps there's one tiny thing you haven't told or. . . ."

Again she shook her head in despair.

"Tell me everything you can remember," he insisted.

"There's nothing to tell that I haven't already told," she said helplessly. "I heard children laughing and shouting in that park opposite—and I wondered how they could find the energy to rush about all day. Then the woman spoke and touched Jimmy's hand. She went on round the corner, and I left him on the pavement. He had moved his head but was still fast asleep. That's all, Tom."

"Not quite," he said. "You bought some groceries. You stood in line behind Mrs. Denton. You came outside and stopped in the doorway. I saw you do that. Why?"

"The light blinded me at first. Then. . . ."

Suddenly she remembered something that had escaped her at the time.

"You've thought of something?" His voice was sharp.

"It's not important," she said wearily. "The traffic had stopped for the lights, and I didn't hear the children playing in the park. I didn't even think about it at the time. I just had a feeling there was something different. Then I saw that the push-chair was empty and——"

"Wait!" Tom's voice was a shout. "You didn't hear the children? How many were there? How old. . . ?" He was on his feet, staring at her.

"I don't know. I didn't see them. They sounded like small children. What is it, Tom?"

"You know the sweetshop by the supermarket," he said excitedly. "There are often children in there. They run across from the park." He paused, and then went on quickly: "Jimmy loves children, Chris. Who they are makes no difference to him. If some had come over. . . ."

The next moment, he was at the phone. ". . . Children playing in the park. . . . No, she didn't see them . . . just heard them laughing and yelling. But she didn't hear them when she came out of the shop. . . . Yes, I know it's a wild guess, but Jimmy likes children. He might follow 'em if he woke up, and he's not old enough to tell anybody who he is, or where he lives. . . . Yes, I'll come straight down."

He slammed down the phone and ran towards the door.

Mrs. Denton came back a little later. She tried to make Christine lie down again, but Christine refused to leave the phone.

At last it rang. It was Tom, and she knew by the sound of his voice that everything was all right.

"It didn't take the police long to find the children who play in that park," he said, "and my hunch was right, Chris. There were two little girls, sisters, six and seven years old. They crossed the street to the sweetshop. Jimmy must have seen them."

Tom stopped talking to take a deep breath. "The children say they didn't notice him in the push-chair. Anyway, he followed them back over the road. When they saw him, they didn't know where he'd come from, or what to do with him. So they took him home.

"It's a pretty rough home, Chris, and nobody was there. No father. Their mother was out at work. The children gave Jimmy some supper and put him to bed, knowing that when their mother got home she'd know how to find out where he belonged. Are you listening, Chris?"

"Yes. Oh, Tom. . . ." Her voice broke.

"Now, don't go to pieces," he said. "Everything's all right. We'll be seeing you in a jiffy."

But the next moment Christine was in Mrs. Denton's arms, crying her heart out, and the woman was saying: "That's right—have a good cry, love. Get it all out of your system before your hubby and baby get here."

Jimmy was asleep when Tom carried him into the flat and he didn't wake up when they undressed him and put him into his own small bed.

"Funny little kid," Tom said unsteadily. "Likes everybody. Cried when he had to leave those two little girls behind. Of course he's got no idea how he scared us to death."

THEY went into the front room and stood looking at the array of food on the table.

"Nice people," he said, breaking the silence.

"Good neighbours," Christine said. "And our friends, Tom."

She met his surprised glance with a quick smile. Still smiling, she picked up his car keys and handed them to him.

"A man with a family has to stick to his job," she said. "You've still got that call in Newcastle at nine tomorrow morning."

"I thought I wouldn't leave you alone . . ." he began.

"I'm no longer alone here," she broke in, pushing him towards the door.

THE END

© *Frank Bennett, 1958*

Does the doctor waste your money?

Continued from page 13

cover for all illnesses and accidents is bound to be expensive. But there *are* ways in which the service could be cheapened without harm to anyone.

An indispensable feature of a hospital is the out-patient department. The London Hospital, to take one example, sees 750,000 out-patients a year. It is officially reckoned that five out-patients cost the same as one in-patient for one day. As the London Hospital costs £27 a week per in-patient, each out-patient costs about 16s. But a family doctor's gross pay, from which he pays his own expenses, works out at about 4s. 6d. for each visit and 3s. for each patient who goes to his surgery. So it is obviously much cheaper for these people to be seen by their own doctors than for them to go to hospital.

A young man patient of mine fell off his motor-cycle and was taken to a hospital casualty department, where he had a number of stitches inserted, a broken wrist put in plaster and a sprained ankle strapped up.

He was told to attend again in three days' time, and that transport would be provided.

Sure enough a car took him backwards and forwards several times over the next three weeks before I heard anything about it. There was nothing in his after-treatment that I could not have carried out.

Another patient with a slipped disc was ordered a belt, to wear for the rest of his life. From time to time the belt needs repair or replacement, but I have no power to get this done. Each time he must get time off from work and visit the orthopaedic surgeon before he can get his belt mended. The same rules apply to surgical boots, artificial limbs, caliper splints and most other appliances except trusses. If there is a question of the appliance being unsuitable then a specialist opinion *is* needed. But surely the family doctor can decide that a strap is broken or a shoe needs soling.

The real cost of hospital treatment is, in fact, not so great as the figures make it appear. Some of the expense should more properly be charged to research. A couple who are patients of mine have a small boy who is mentally retarded. Naturally they are anxious to do anything they can for him, but they agreed with me that, barring miracles, nothing could be done. However, he was taken to a well-known children's hospital for investigation.

This took twenty-two weeks, and the cost was £638. At the end he was as mentally retarded as ever.

We need to be clear why this was done. Nobody expected to cure the child and no false hopes were held out to the parents. But medicine would make no progress if incurable conditions were never investigated. This £638 was plainly spent on research, and the cost in cases such as this should be charged to a special research fund.

AUTHORSHIP—4

A bad book is as much of a labour to write as a good one, it comes as sincerely from the author's soul.

Aldous Huxley

Research has its priorities, and if a definite sum were allocated to research it could then be decided, for example, what should be spent on cancer, polio, the common cold or mentally retarded children. We should at least know what we were doing, instead of talking glumly about the vast expense of hospital treatment.

When the National Health Service started it was a canon that everything should be free. This principle has been modified, and I think that is a good thing. Nobody wants to put a lot of expense on people at times of serious illness, but a small payment stops ridiculous demands and helps to make people value what they get.

The drug bill, which was £35 million in 1950, rose to £50 million in 1952 and, because of the shilling charge, was still £50 million in 1956 in spite of the rise in drug costs. It is not an imposition to pay this shilling; all who receive national assistance automatically get their shillings back, and other poor people are able to do so if they ask. Where bigger payments are involved the saving is quite striking.

At the beginning of the service I was inundated with requests for certificates for eye testing, and many patients became the proud possessors of glasses which found their way into a drawer. Eye testing is still free, but patients now have to pay part of the cost of the glasses. I do not know a single person who needs glasses and cannot get them because of the cost. In 1950 this service cost £19½ million; in 1956 less than £9 million.

Dentistry started off with a rush for false teeth—some, it is true, needed owing to years of neglect. Children and expectant mothers still have their teeth seen to free, but since charges were imposed the annual cost has come down from £40 million to £32 million.

Some people are quite without conscience in their demands on a "free" service, and it is incredible how many believe that it all comes out of their weekly stamp. As they cannot avoid paying for that, they might as well, they think, have something for their money.

But even if the cost is not reduced the service is still a vast economy, as well as a great humanitarian undertaking. Men who would otherwise be unemployed are returned to work. Children who might have been permanent invalids grow up healthy and strong.

A patient of mine, a woman of thirty-five, had suffered since childhood from rheumatic heart disease. She lived quietly at home, a semi-invalid, breathless if she exerted herself, an expense and anxiety to her family. Until quite recently she would have lived like that to the age of fifty or sixty, when she would have died of heart failure. Her cost to the community would have been just a few shillings for digitalis tablets.

But modern heart surgery has brought new hope to such patients. After much thought and investigation she was admitted to hospital. Not to her local hospital, for experts in this new surgery are still to be found only in a few large centres. She went to a famous London hospital, where the cost per in-patient is £33 a week.

She was there for six weeks, which cost about £200, but she can now get about without distress, enjoy life and even look forward to taking a job in the near future. That is where the money goes.

THE END

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Won't Lie Down
The Gipsy In Me
Mercilessly
That Wedding Photograph
To Be In The Fashion
Skipping Around
In Dad's Case
Money For Old Rope
Our Baby-sitter
Doing Things In Style

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

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"BULLETS" No. 2,131 RESULT—FIRST PRIZE, £450 plus Easter Weekend in Paris, or £500 lump sum: H. G. Stevenson, 47 Crescent, Totteridge, High Wycombe:

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£25: J. Ames, 102 Crown Street, Lowestoft: Guaranteed To Soften—Fate's Blows—*Tin's* "Helmet."

£10: A. G. Faulkner, The Orchard, Kenn, Exeter: Kruschev And Co.—"Shop-window" Overhead—"Works" Underground!

OTHER AWARDS. £9: Mrs. K. D. Walker, 52 Burnham Way, London, W.13: April Budget—Mocking, "Oh, To Be—!" £8: R. Capon, 120 Bellemoor Road, Shirley, Southampton: Bashful Swain — Ernie — I'm "Losing Interest." £7: A. R. Radcliffe (Sen.), 72 Alexandra Street, Ashton-under-Lyne: Amory's Budget—"Armoury" Blowing Sky-high? £6: W. Jones, "Homeleigh," Bridge End Grove, Grantham: The Economic Clouds—Low—So "Heads Down"! £5: J. E. Tomlinson, 129 Henthorn Road, Clitheroe: Like A Sputnik—Pleasure's "Roundabout" Burns Out! £5: J. W. Weeks, 28 Victoria Road, Cirencester: The Sights Of Paris—Then Paradise—*Jaywalker* Saw! £5: E. Wilkes, 23 High Park Avenue, Wollaston, Stourbridge: Kruschev And Co.—Want Talks? Want *Listeners*!

Ten Prizes of £2 10s., 100 "Double Sixers" and 1,500 "Good Shots" have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best Bullet received; others in order of merit. The test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed at 6d. per Bullet. Make P.O. payable to John Bull, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in John Bull dated May 10), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, April 26, for early news of No. 2,136 result.)

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WOMAN'S REALM

OUT TUESDAY, APR. 8

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